Rurouni Kenshin
SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL
Story & Art by
Nobuhiro Watsuki
volume 20

和月伸宏

NOBUHIRO WATSUKI

VOLUME 20

AFTER ALL THAT'S BEEN SAID AND DONE, IT'S FINALLY VOLUME 20. IT TOOK FOUR YEARS TO GET HERE, AND THAT'S MORE THAN ENOUGH...ACTUALLY I'M NOWHERE NEAR SATISFIED. I HAVE A HUNGER THAT HAS YET TO BE SATISFIED! I WANT TO DRAW BETTER PICTURES. I WANT TO WRITE MORE INTRIGUING STORIES. I WANT TO GIVE BIRTH TO MORE ATTRACTIVE CHARACTERS. I KNOW I'M BEING GREEDY, BUT I CAN'T STOP BEING A MANGA ARTIST! THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING!

Rurouni Kenshin, which has found fans not only in Japan but around the world, first made its appearance in 1992, as an original short story in ***Weekly Shonen Jump Special***. Later rewritten and published as a regular, continuing ***Jump*** series in 1994, ***Rurouni Kenshin*** ended serialization in 1999 but continued in popularity, as evidenced by the 2000 publication of ***Yahiko no Sakabatô*** ("Yahiko's Reversed-Edge Sword") in ***Weekly Shonen Jump***. His most current work, ***Busô Renkin*** ("Armored Alchemist"), began publication in June 2003, also in ***Jump***.

RUROUNI KENSHIN
VOL. 20: REMEMBRANCE
The SHONEN JUMP Graphic Novel Edition

STORY AND ART BY
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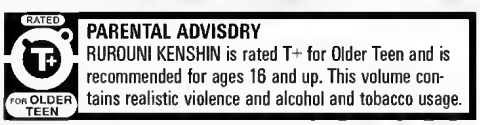
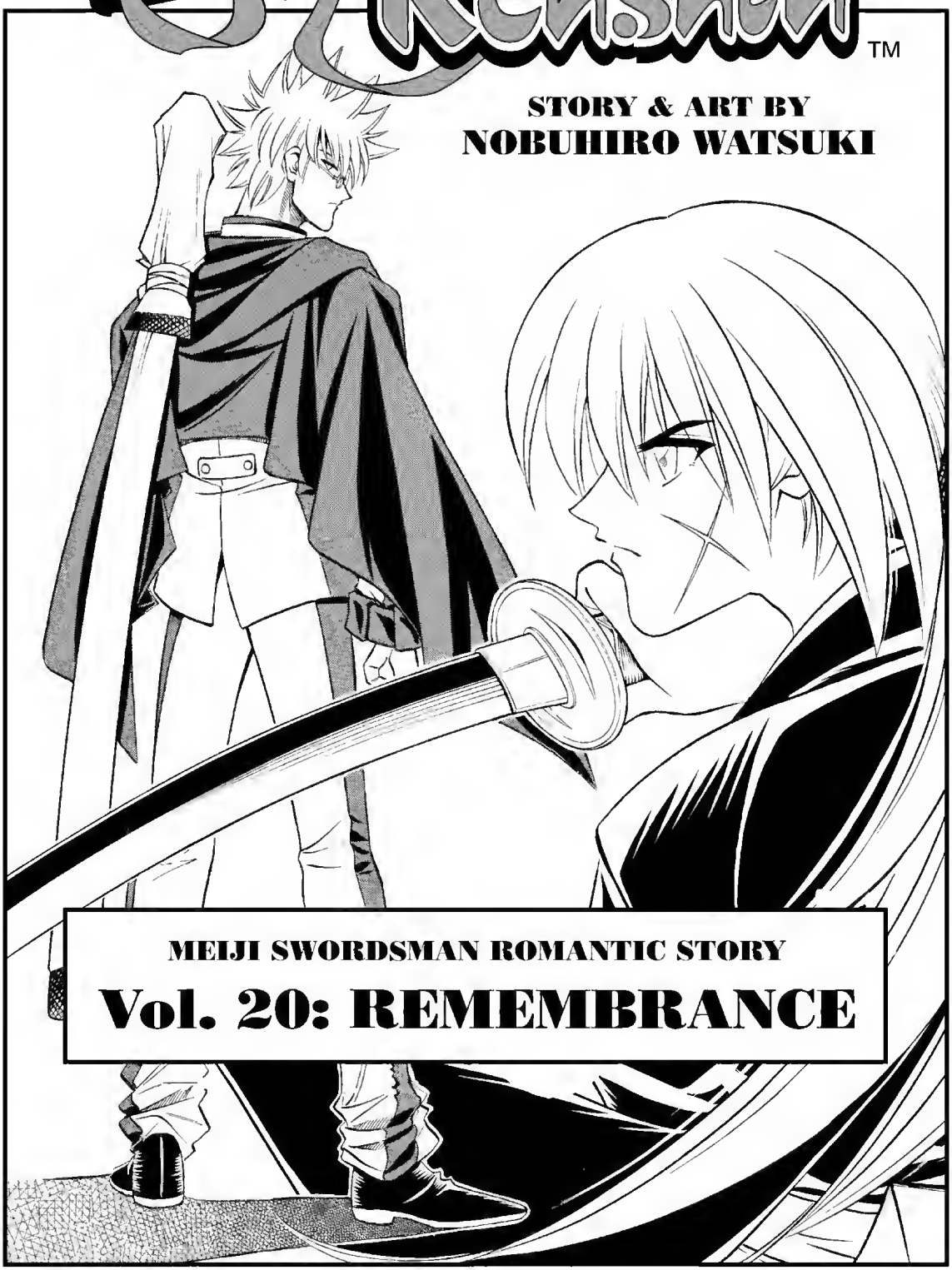


SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Rurouni Kenshin™



STORY & ART BY
NOBUHIRO WATSUKI

MEIJI SWORDSMAN ROMANTIC STORY

Vol. 20: REMEMBRANCE

るろうに剣心

Once he was *hitokiri*, an assassin, called Battōsai. His name was legend among the pro-Imperialist or "patriot" warriors who launched the Meiji Era. Now, Himura Kenshin is *rurouni*, a wanderer, and carries a reversed-edge *sakabatō* to prohibit himself from killing.

雪代（緋村）巴
Yukishiro (Himura) Tomoe

THUS FAR

Having finally thwarted Shishio Makoto's plan to conquer Japan, Kenshin and his friends return to Tokyo. While Sanosuke seeks treatment for his injured hand, the others return to everyday life at Kamiya Dojo. But the peace is short-lived, as warriors who hold grudges against Battōsai gather to exact a form of revenge they call *Jinchū*—if the heavens will not cast judgment, they themselves will. Akabeko is destroyed by an Armstrong cannon fired from Ueno Mountain, and simultaneous attacks are unleashed against Maekawa Dojo and police chief Uramura's house. Kenshin anguishes over the harm that falls on others from his past as a *hitokiri*. The mastermind of the revenge, Yukishiro Enishi, appears before Kenshin and announces that he will strike Kamiya Dojo in ten days. Kenshin begins to see images of Tomoe, Yukishiro's sister—a woman whose life was fraught with tragedy. Kenshin falls into despair as he tries to find a way to pay for his crimes, but after seeing Yahiko, Kaoru, and the rest standing courageously against the danger, he knows he must fight to protect the present. He begins to tell everyone of his past...

The time is Bakumatsu. Kenshin has been wielding his sword for the "New Era" under Katsura Kogorō of Chōshū. One night, he defends himself against an assassin sent by the *shōgunate*—but a woman he helped at a pub witnesses the scene!

CAST

神谷薫
Kamiya Kaoru

緋村剣心（人斬り抜刀斎）
Himura Kenshin (Hitokiri Battōsai)

相楽左之助
Sagara Sanosuke

桂小五郎
Katsura Kogorō

明神弥彦
Myōjin Yahiko

雪代縁（子供時代）
Yukishiro Enishi (childhood)

CONTENTS

RUROUNI KENSHIN
Meiji Swordsman Romantic Story
BOOK TWENTY: REMEMBRANCE

Act 168
Remembrance 4: Yukishiro Tomoe
7

Act 169
Remembrance 5: Madness
25

Act 170
Remembrance 6: Chaos: Genji
43

Act 171
Brief Intermission
61

Act 172
Remembrance 7: By the Farmlands
78

Act 173
Remembrance 8: Arrival of Enishi
97

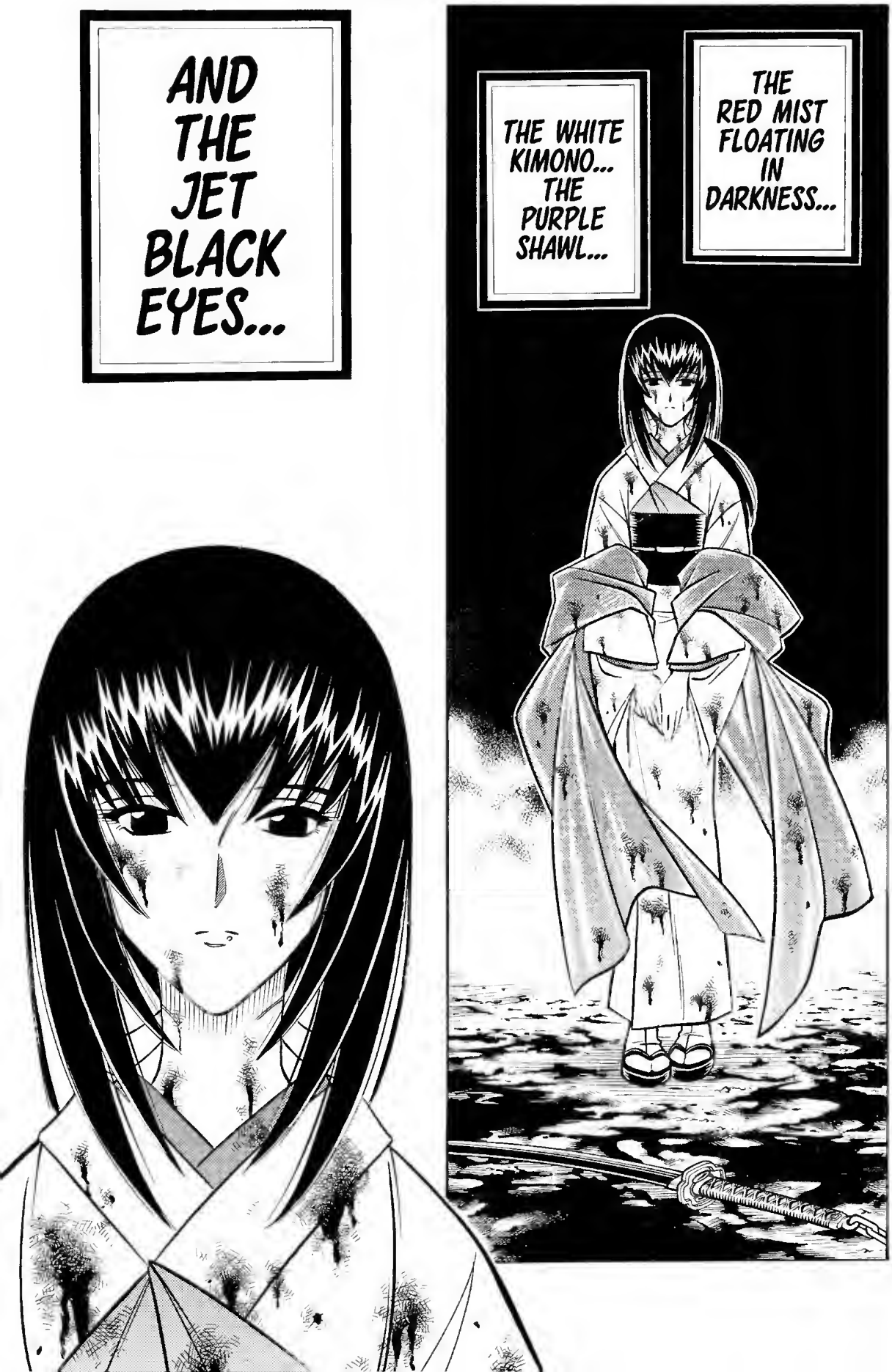
Act 174
Remembrance 9: White Snow
115

Act 175
Remembrance 10: The Binding Forest
135

Act 176
Remembrance 11: Shadow Warriors
155

Act 177
Remembrance 12: Fierce Battle
175

Act 168
Remembrance 4: Yukishiro Tomoe



Act 168

Remembrance 4: Yukishiro Tomoe

...
!
OH!
SLUMP

I THOUGHT SHE MIGHT FAINT...
A NATURAL RESPONSE TO SEEING SO MUCH BLOOD.

I DEBATED WHETHER OR NOT TO SILENCE HER...

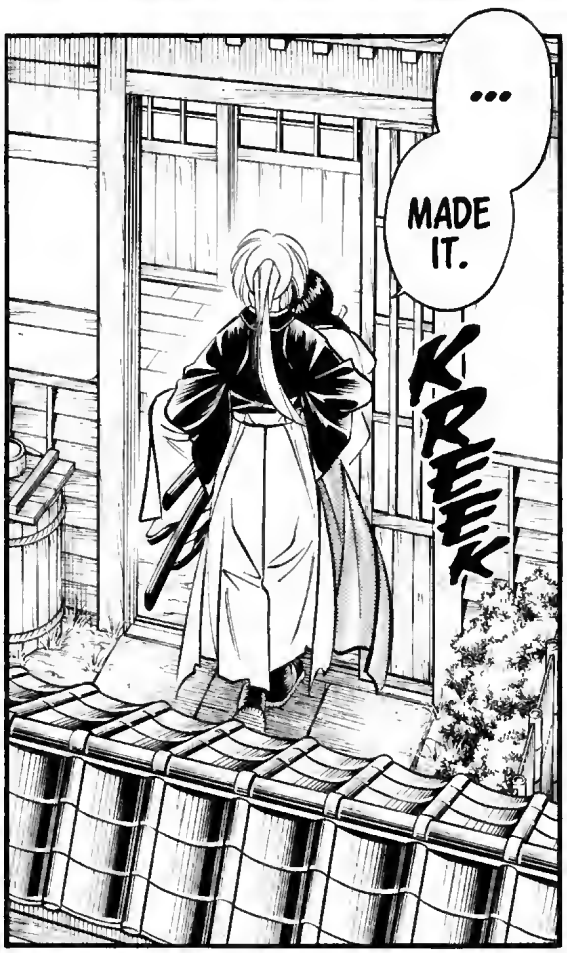
BUT I KNEW...I COULDN'T.

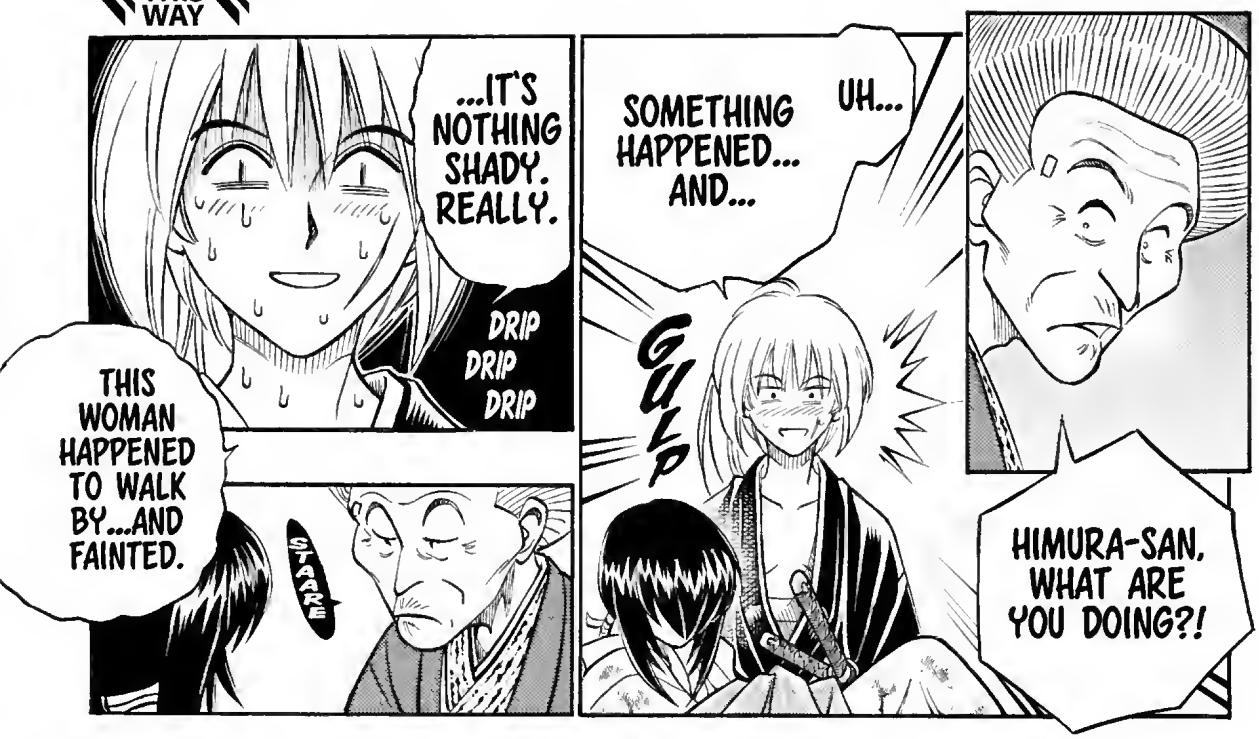
READ THIS WAY
NOW... WHAT SHALL I DO?
I CAN'T LEAVE A WITNESS.
AND I CAN'T LEAVE A WOMAN ALONE AT NIGHT IN KYOTO.
HOIST
I HAVE NO CHOICE.
THE SMELL OF PERFUME...
HAKUBAIKŌ, I THINK...
..NO.
THIS ISN'T LIKE ME...

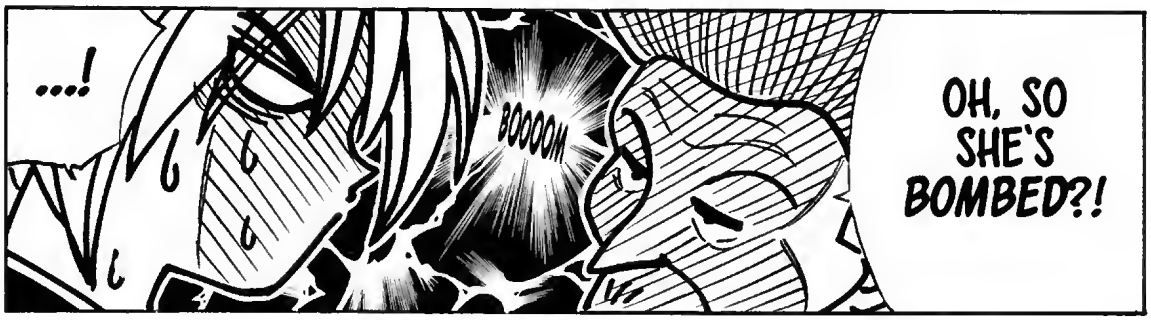
旅館
小萩屋
KOHAGIYA INN

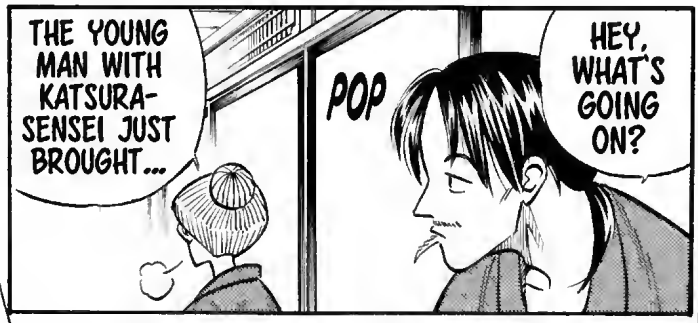
SNEEEEAK

YOU'RE BACK LATE THIS EVE—
OH, HIMURA-SAN!


...
MADE IT.
KREEK


...IT'S NOTHING SHADY. REALLY.
DRIP DRIP DRIP
THIS WOMAN HAPPENED TO WALK BY...AND FAINTED.
STARE
SOMETHING HAPPENED... AND...
UH...
GULP
HIMURA-SAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!


...!
BOOOOM
OH, SO SHE'S BOMBED?!


THE YOUNG MAN WITH KATSURA-SENSEI JUST BROUGHT...
POP
HEY, WHAT'S GOING ON?

THIS ISN'T A HOUSE OF ASSIGNATION, YOU KNOW.
...I KNOW.
I'LL PREPARE A CHANGE OF CLOTHES AND A BATH.

BAT...I MEAN HIMURA-KUN? BROUGHT A WOMAN?!
WHAT ?!

...FEH.
JUST A DRUNK.
...
...ARE DERANGING ME...
THE SMELL OF BLOOD... AND OF HAKUBAIKO...

READ THIS WAY
BLINK
CHICHICHI
旅館
小萩屋
NO! I FELL ASLEEP?!
DM DM DM DM
LADY!
KITCHEN
板場
KARRA
WSH
!

NOW TAKE THIS TO MATSU HALL.
YES'M.
OH, GOOD MORNING, HIMURA-SAN.
YOUR GIRLFRIEND HAS BEEN A GREAT HELP.
...

TOMOE.
MY NAME?

...UM...

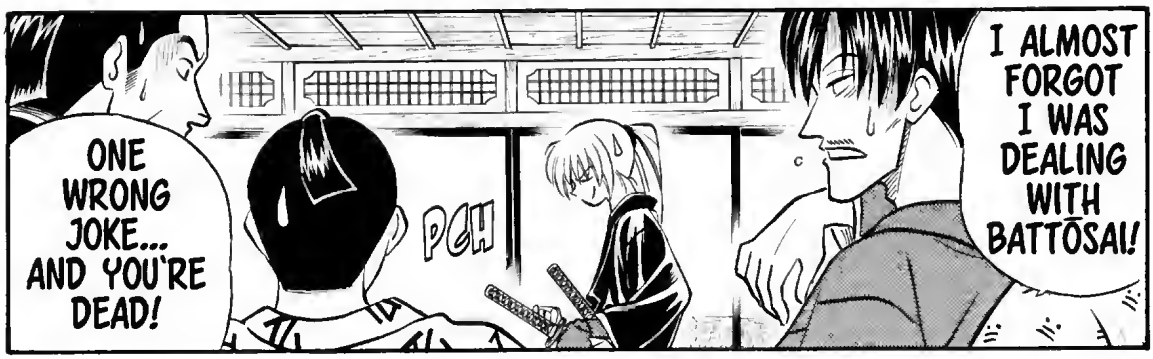
I AM BUSY NOW. TALK TO ME LATER.
...I HAVE TO TALK TO YOU.
EXCUSE ME. I'VE BROUGHT YOUR BREAKFAST.
TAAAA

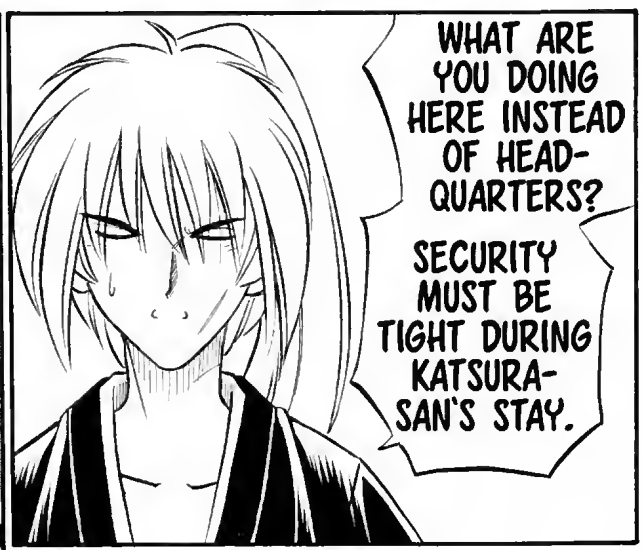
SO, TOMOE-SAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
CAN'T YOU TELL?
HELPING OUT IN THE KITCHEN...?
SEE? YOU ALREADY KNOW.
TK TK

OOO
!!
BLAB BLAB
AND CLASSY!!
BLAB BLAB
SHE'S BEAUTIFUL!
BLAB BLAB
BUT JUST AS MEAN-LOOKING AS HIM!
BLAB BLAB
BLAB BLAB
BLAB BLAB
SO THIS IS HIMURA-KUN'S WOMAN!
...YOU DON'T SERIOUSLY THINK...
NUGI
NUGI
HEH! WHAT ARE YOU ACTING SO EMBAR-RASSED ABOUT?
HEY HEY HEY!!
I'M TOMOE. I'LL SEE YOU AROUND.

ACK!
TIK
ZZZ
ZOOM

SO...
HOW WAS IT?

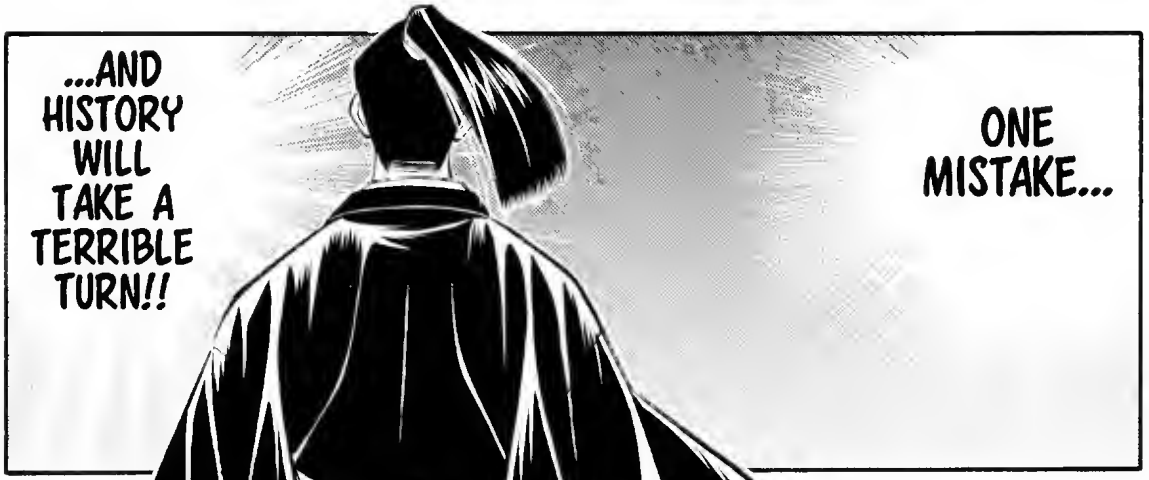

ONE WRONG JOKE... AND YOU'RE DEAD!
PCH
I ALMOST FORGOT I WAS DEALING WITH BATTŌSAI!


WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE INSTEAD OF HEAD-QUARTERS?
SECURITY MUST BE TIGHT DURING KATSURA-SAN'S STAY.

*AN ENTERTAINER IN KYOTO. KATSURA KOGORŌ'S LOVER. WHO BECAME HIS WIFE AFTER THE REVOLUTION.

YOU WILL NEED TO BE CAREFUL OF YOURSELF.
NO. I'LL TAKE CARE OF MY END.
...WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO GUARD YOU?
TP
I'VE BEEN THINKING THE SAME.
FURUDAKA, WHO WAS SUPPOSED TO ATTEND OUR SECRET MEETING AT THE GION FESTIVAL, HAS JUST BEEN ARRESTED BY THE SHINSEN-GUMI.

THE TRAITOR MUST BE FOUND QUICKLY OR EVERYTHING WILL GO WRONG.
HE WILL SURELY BE THE NEXT TARGET... THE GREAT PILLAR OF THE CHŌSHŪ REVOLUTIONISTS...

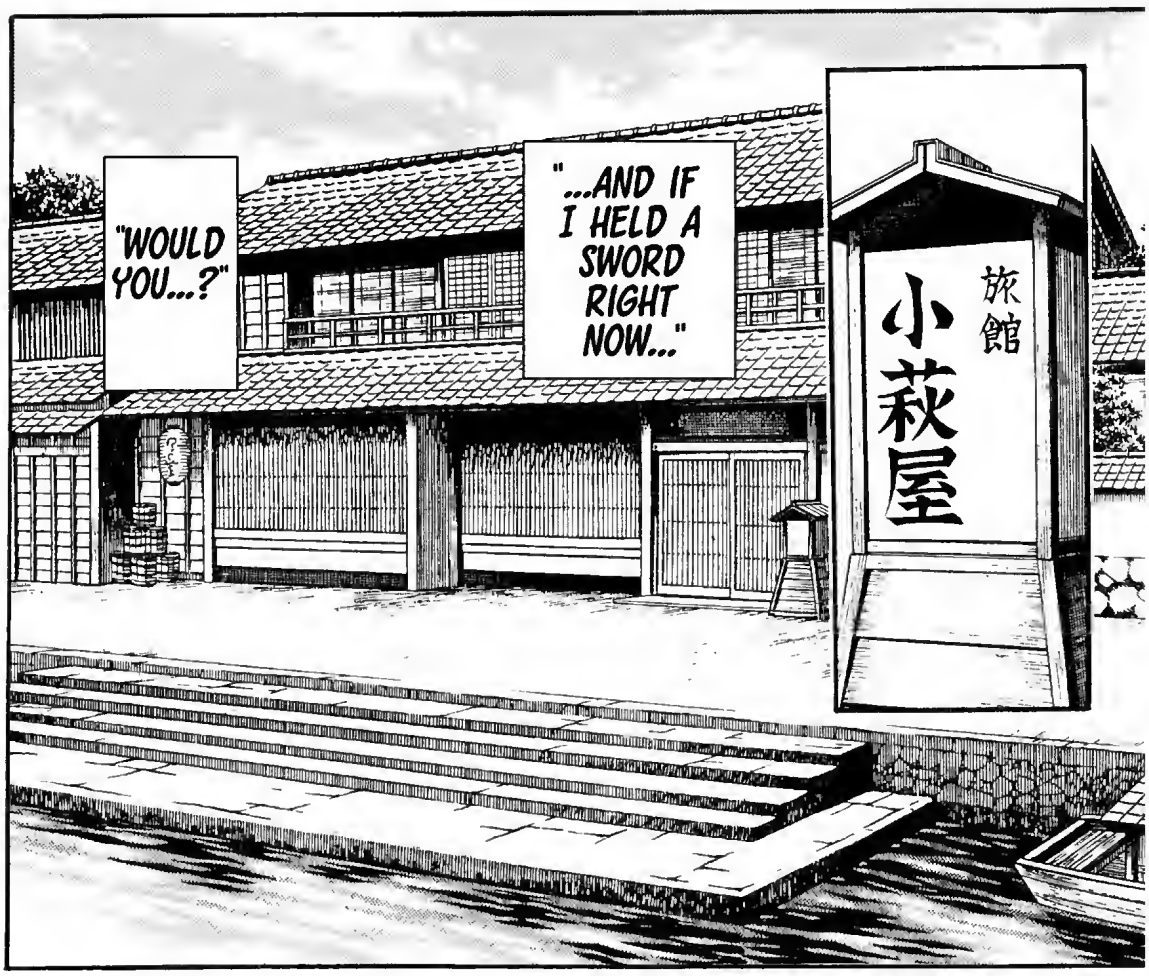

...AND HISTORY WILL TAKE A TERRIBLE TURN!!
ONE MISTAKE...

READ THIS WAY
AM I IN YOUR WAY HERE?
THE LADY REALLY LIKES ME.
WHAT?
I WANT YOU TO SWEAR THAT YOU WILL FORGET WHAT YOU SAW LAST NIGHT... AND LEAVE.
...
YOUR FAMILY WILL WORRY.
IF I HAD A FAMILY TO GO HOME TO...
...I WOULDN'T BE ALONE AND DRUNK ON SAKE.
I DON'T KNOW YOUR STORY, BUT WE'RE IN NO POSITION TO TAKE CARE OF YOU.
...DON'T LET HER GET TO YOU.
THEN WILL YOU GET RID OF ME...
AS YOU DID THE BLACK SAMURAI THE OTHER NIGHT?

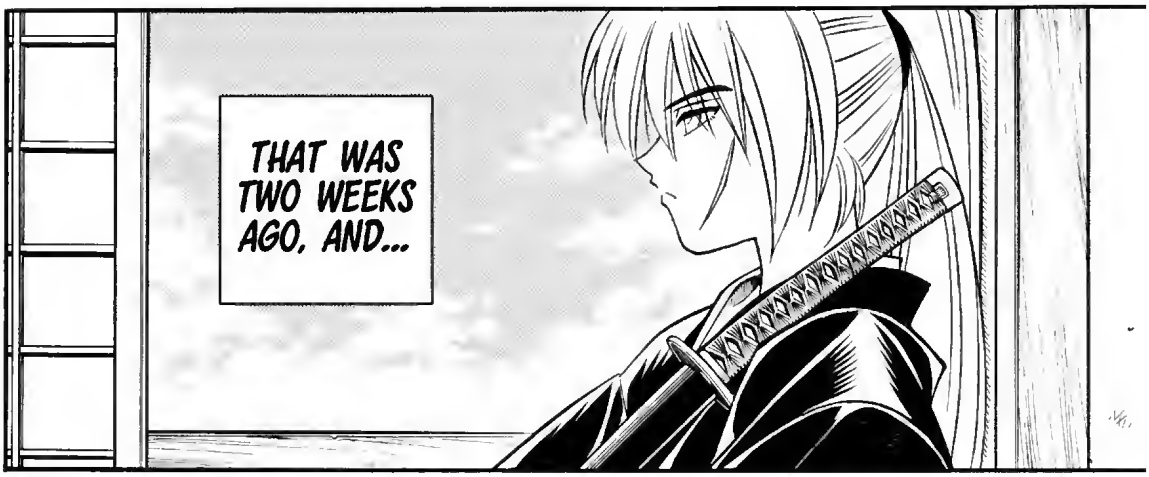
I WILL NEVER KILL AN UNARMED CIVILIAN, ENEMY OR NOT.
YOU CAN THINK WHATEVER YOU'D LIKE OF ME...BUT I FIGHT FOR THE NEW ERA WHERE EVERYONE CAN LIVE IN PEACE.
I DO NOT KILL INDISCRIMINATELY. MY ENEMIES ARE ONLY THOSE WHO BEAR SWORDS FOR THE SHŌGUNATE.
THEN IT ALL COMES DOWN TO THE SWORD...
TK
AND IF I HELD A SWORD RIGHT NOW...
WOULD YOU...?
...
...I... DON'T...

TELL ME...
...WHENEVER YOU FIND THE ANSWER.
SHF
HH!
W-WAIT A MINUTE !!
DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE GOING TO STAY?!
B-BAM
...UGH.
AM I GOING INSANE?
...OR AM I BECOMING SANE AGAIN...?

Rurouni Kenshin



Act 169
Remembrance 5: Madness

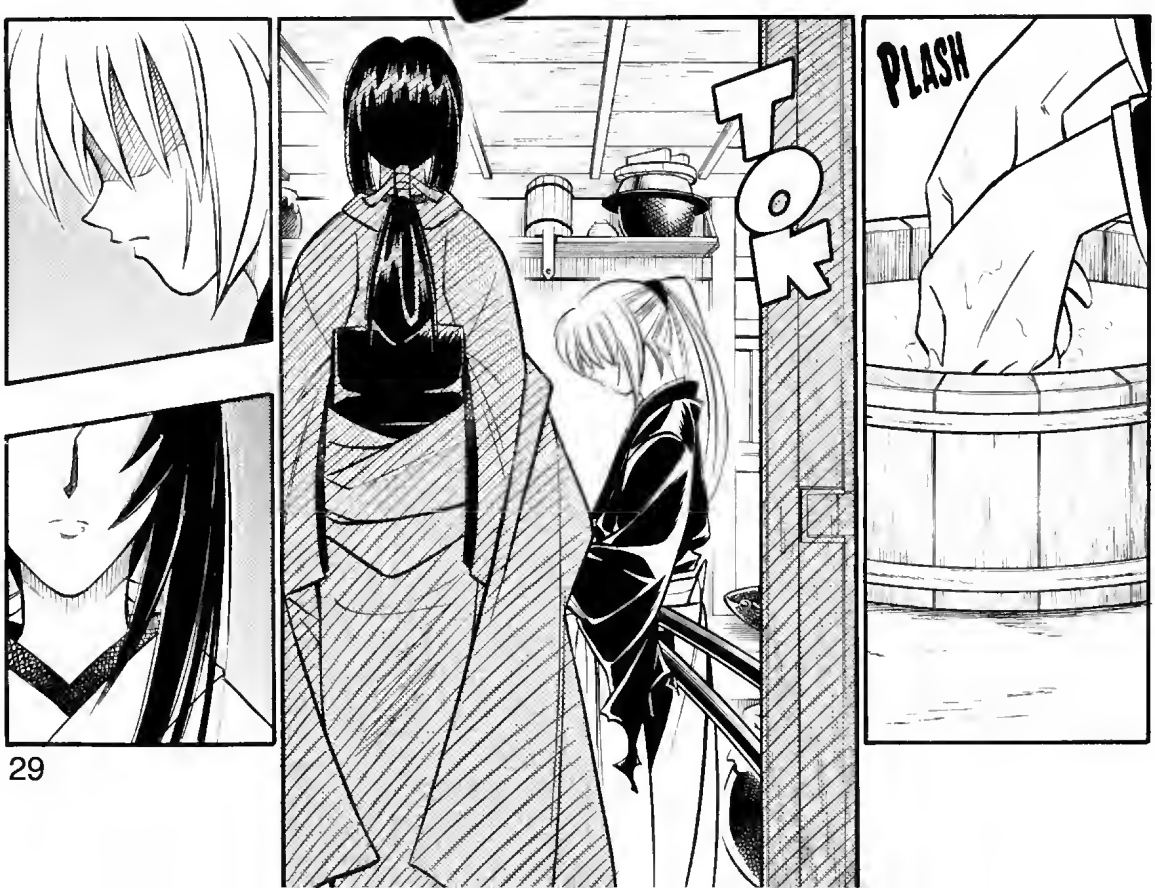


GET OUT. I'M GOING TO CLEAN YOUR ROOM.
I DIDN'T ASK YOU TO—
THE LANDLADY DID.
SO YUKISHIRO TOMOE PLAYS THE ROLE...
...AND STAYS.
WHAT...? A NOTEBOOK?
THAT'S MY DIARY! DON'T READ THAT!
AS IF!
...WORSE THAN A SISTER.
JUST IN CASE!

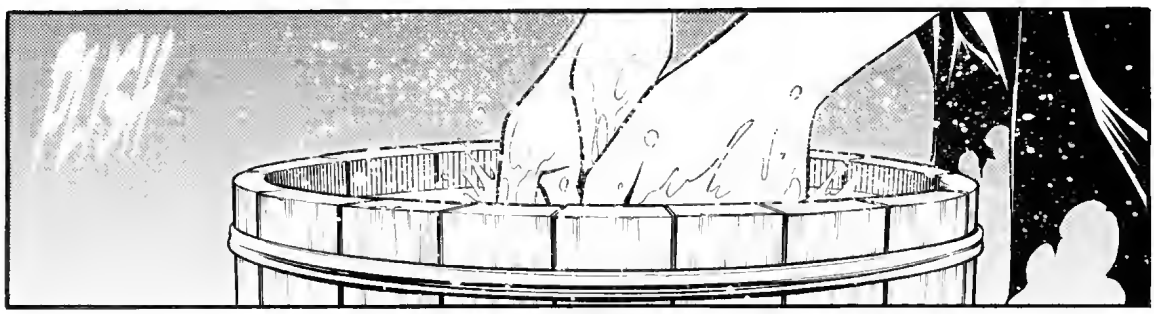
I GET IT, I GET IT!!
ZZZOOOM
WHY THE LONG FACE?
FIGHTING WITH TOMOE-CHAN?
HIMURA!
I'IZUKA-SAN.
...WHAT DO YOU WANT?
KIN
MAYBE IT'S YOUR DIET.
YOU SURE ARE IRRI-TABLE.
WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU.
TONIGHT.

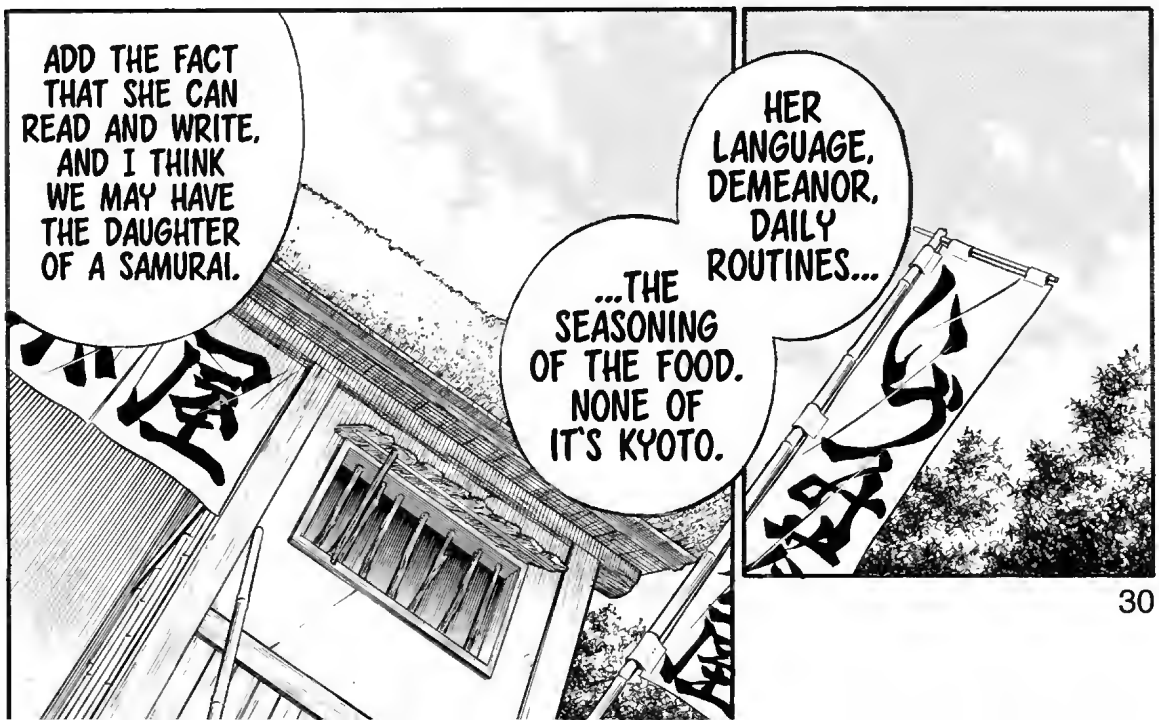
飛天御剣流
HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ—
RYŪSŌSEN "DRAGON'S NEST STRIKE" GARAMI "STRANGLE"!
龍巣閃・咬
...!!
WHENEVER A BLACK ENVELOPE WAS DELIVERED...
...BLOOD RAINED ON THE KYOTO NIGHT.

...OVER AND OVER AGAIN.
IT WAS TENCHŪ...

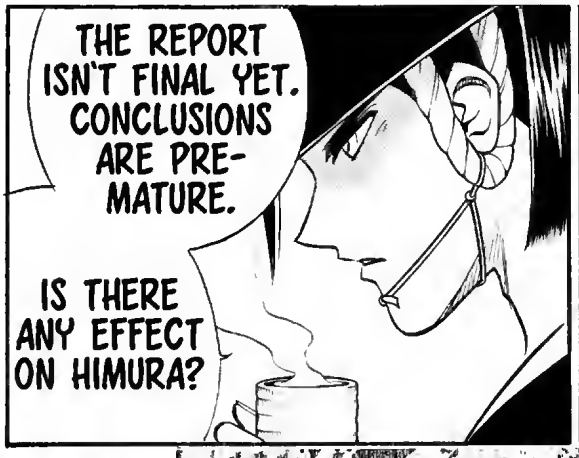

TOK
PLASH

WILL YOU JUST...
...GO ON KILLING PEOPLE LIKE THIS?




ADD THE FACT THAT SHE CAN READ AND WRITE, AND I THINK WE MAY HAVE THE DAUGHTER OF A SAMURAI.
...THE SEASONING OF THE FOOD. NONE OF IT'S KYOTO.
HER LANGUAGE, DEMEANOR, DAILY ROUTINES...

SO THEN YOU DON'T BELIEVE YUKISHIRO TOMOE IS A SPY?
BUT THERE'S BEEN NO SIGN OF HER CONTACTING ANYONE OUTSIDE...


THE REPORT ISN'T FINAL YET. CONCLUSIONS ARE PRE-MATURE.
IS THERE ANY EFFECT ON HIMURA?

PROBABLY JUST A STRAY KITTEN.
RAN AWAY FROM HOME FOR SOME REASON.

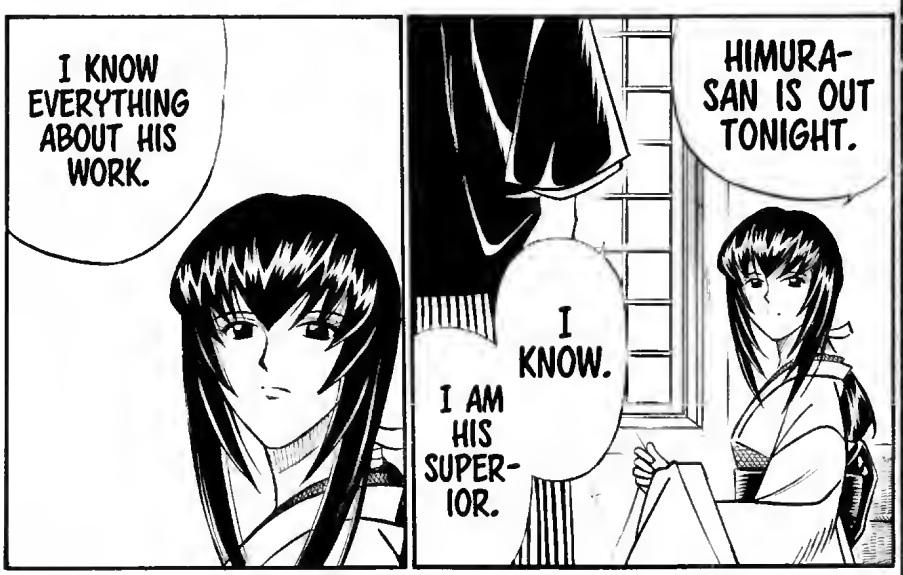
...

THE OBSERVERS HAVE SUGGESTED...
...THAT HIS SWORD MAY BE GETTING DULLER.

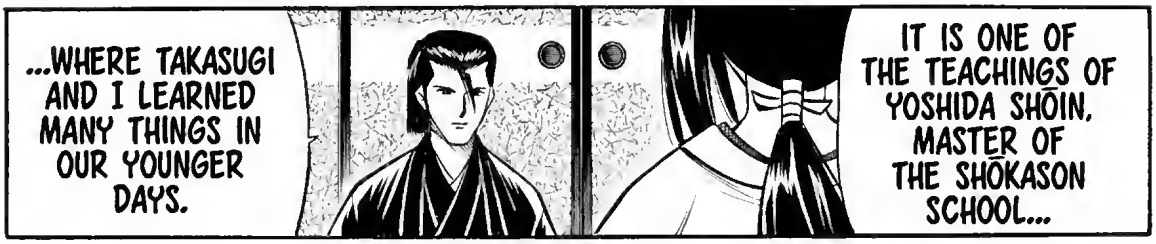
NOT TOO BAD AN EFFECT, BUT...
BUT?

...YES?

MAY I INTRUDE UPON YOU A BIT?
FORGIVE THE LATE INTER-RUPTION.


I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT HIS WORK.
I AM HIS SUPER-IOR.
I KNOW.
HIMURA-SAN IS OUT TONIGHT.

"MADNESS"?

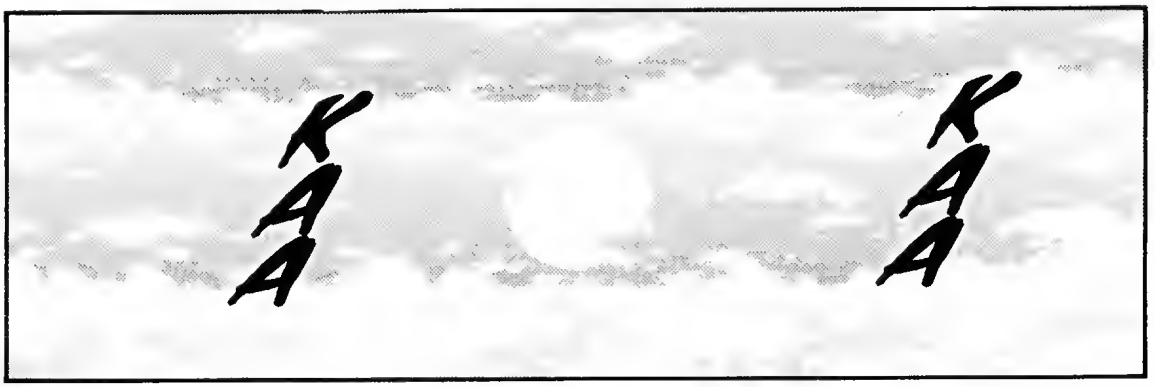

...WHERE TAKASUGI AND I LEARNED MANY THINGS IN OUR YOUNGER DAYS.
IT IS ONE OF THE TEACHINGS OF YOSHIDA SHŌIN, MASTER OF THE SHŌKASON SCHOOL...

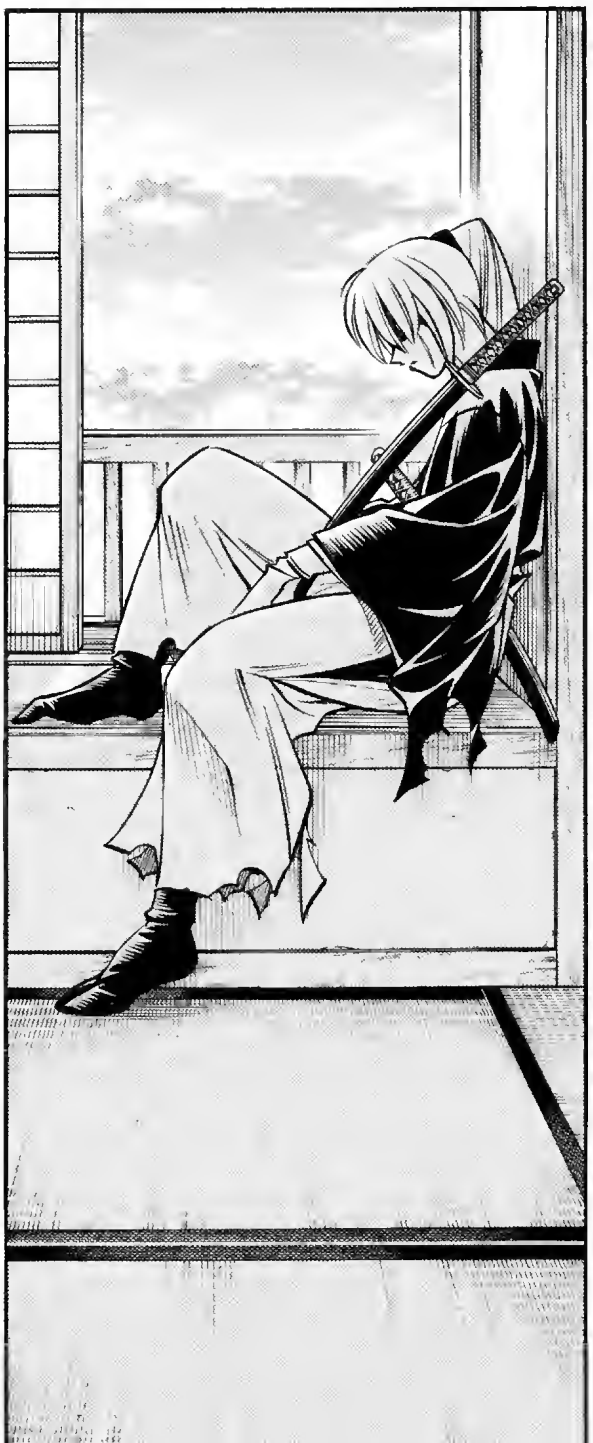
...WE TOO MUST CALL UPON THE MADNESS THAT GIVES US STRENGTH.
IN ORDER TO DESTROY THIS ERA, AT THE PEAK OF ITS MADNESS AFTER 300 YEARS OF TOKUGAWA RULE...

THAT IS THE POWER SOURCE OF THE CHŌSHŪ NOW.
JUSTICE, SO HONED THAT EVEN MAD RAGE CANNOT CONFUSE IT...

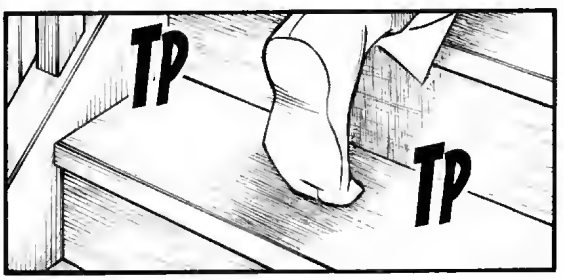
AND HIMURA IS LEADING THIS "MAD" JUSTICE.
HIS DUTY IS THE HARSHEST OF THEM ALL.
WHAT DUTY ARE YOU THINKING OF MAKING ME DO?
...AND?
P-TAM
I DON'T WANT YOU TO DO ANYTHING. I JUST WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND WHAT WE ARE DOING.
KARA
EXCUSE ME...

FLIP
...
PLISH
PLISH

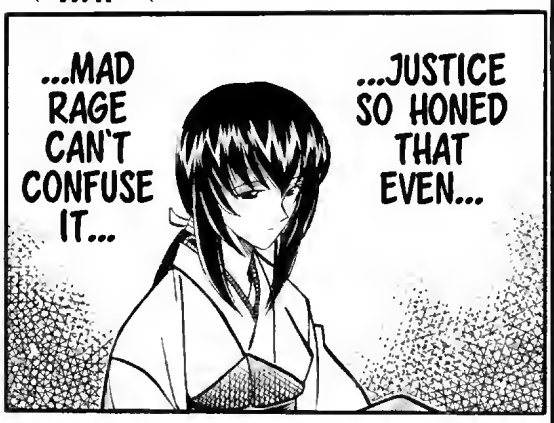

KAA
KAA



YOU'RE DONE FOR TODAY.
THANKS.

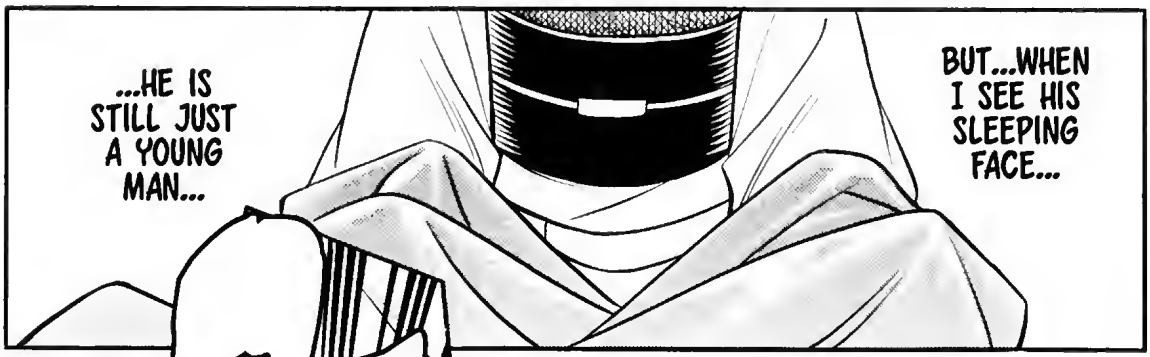

TP
TP

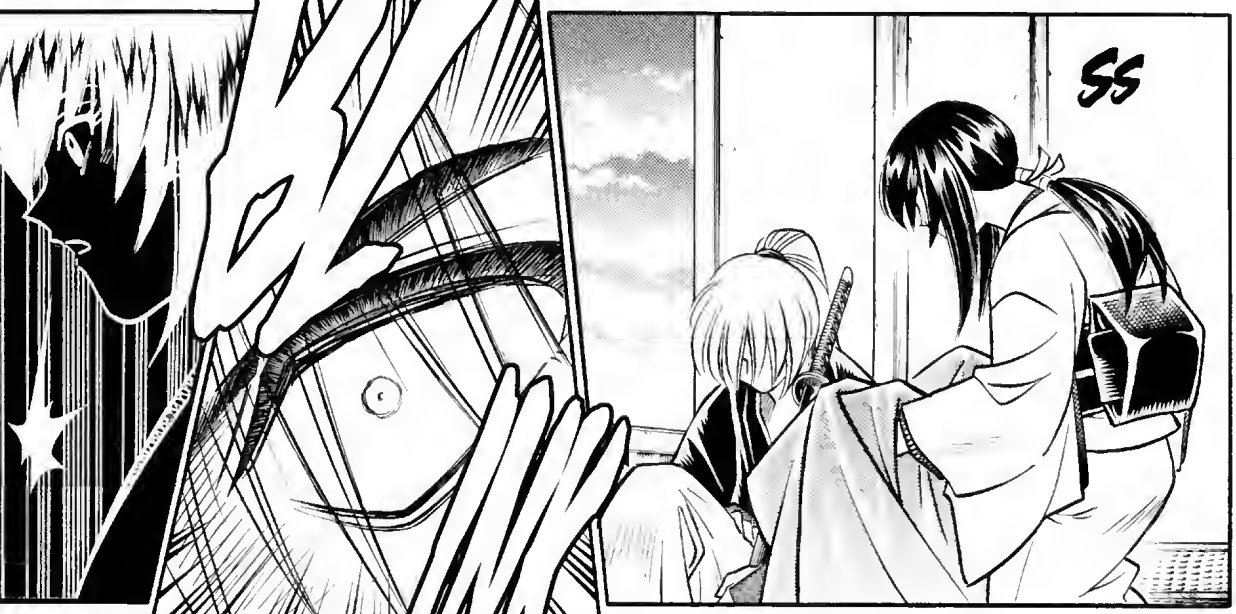
SSH


...MAD RAGE CAN'T CONFUSE IT...
...JUSTICE SO HONED THAT EVEN...

SS

THE LEADER OF THIS "MAD JUSTICE."


...HE IS STILL JUST A YOUNG MAN...
BUT...WHEN I SEE HIS SLEEPING FACE...


SS

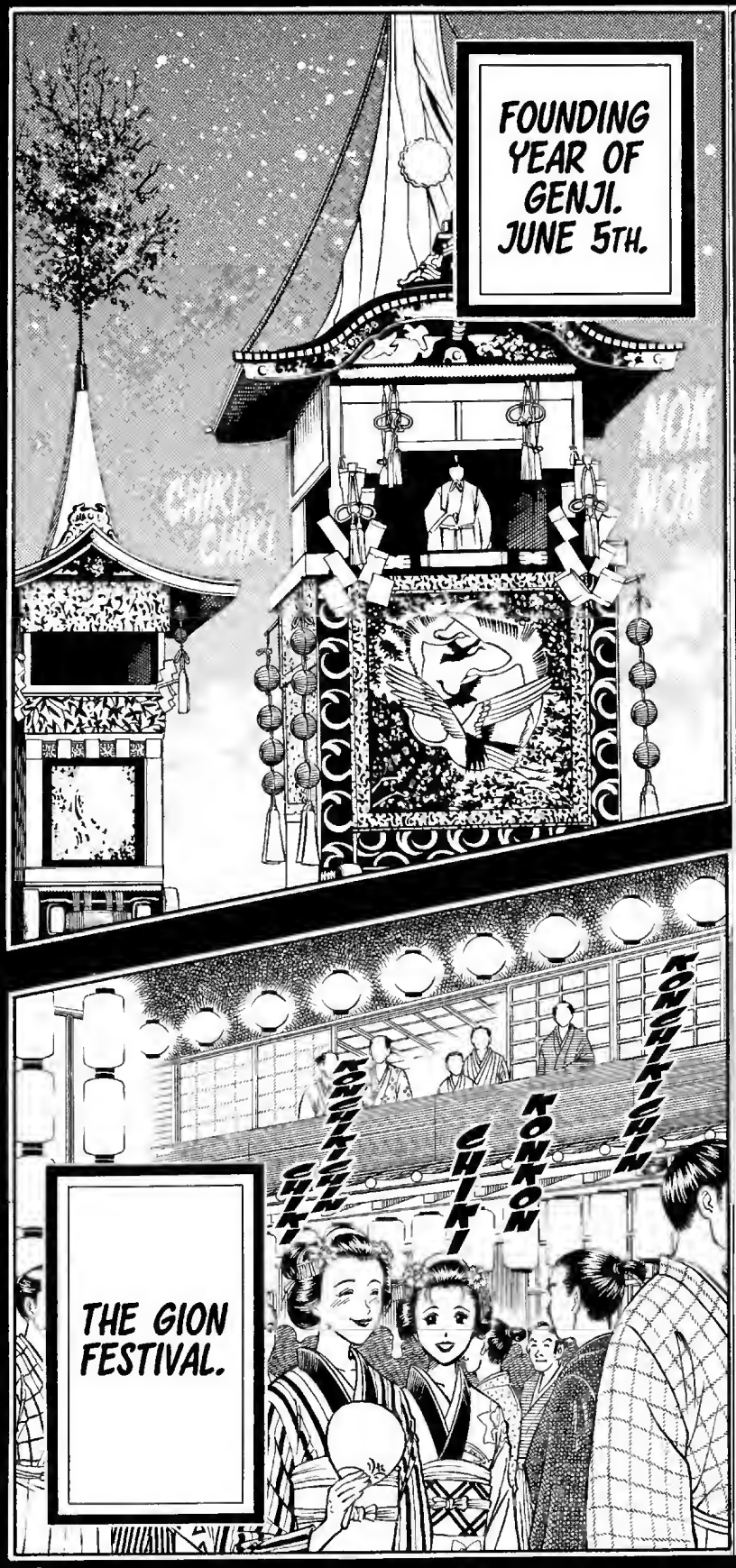
WHAAP

OH!
AFTER EVERYTHING I SAID ABOUT NOT KILLING CIVILIANS, I'M...
PLEASE LEAVE NOW, OR ELSE I WILL END UP...
HH
HH
...I'M SORRY...

FAP
I'LL STAY HERE A WHILE LONGER.
YOU NEED A SHEATH TO HOLD YOUR MADNESS NOW.
!

YOU ASKED ME A LONG TIME AGO...WOULD I KILL YOU IF YOU HELD A SWORD?
THE ANSWER IS..."I WOULDN'T."
I WILL NOT KILL YOU.
NO MATTER WHAT MAY HAPPEN, I WILL NEVER KILL YOU.
NEVER... YOU...

Rurouni Kenshin

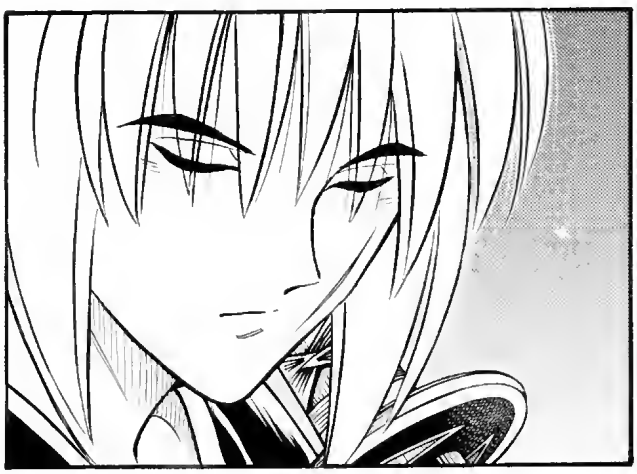


Act 170

Remembrance 6: Chaos: Genji

伸宏和月

KNUCKLE
KNUCKLE
KNUCKLE



LET'S GO TO THE FESTIVAL!
THEN WE CAN HIT THE BROTHELS AND...UH...
SHP
HEY, HIMURA!

READ THIS WAY
PLEASE BE QUIET.
HIMURA-SAN IS ALREADY SLEEPING.
Ss...
HIMURA IN DEEP SLEEP?
IN FRONT OF ANOTHER PERSON?
THIS COULD MEAN...
P-TAM
...THAT THE JOKE IS NO LONGER A JOKE.
WELL, YOU TWO BE AS FRIENDLY AS YOU LIKE.
IT DOESN'T MAKE MY POSITION ANY WORSE.
!
OH, KATAKAI-SAN. GOOD TIMING. DO YOU—
HH
HH
THIS IS AN EMER-GENCY!
FORGET THAT!
HH
HH

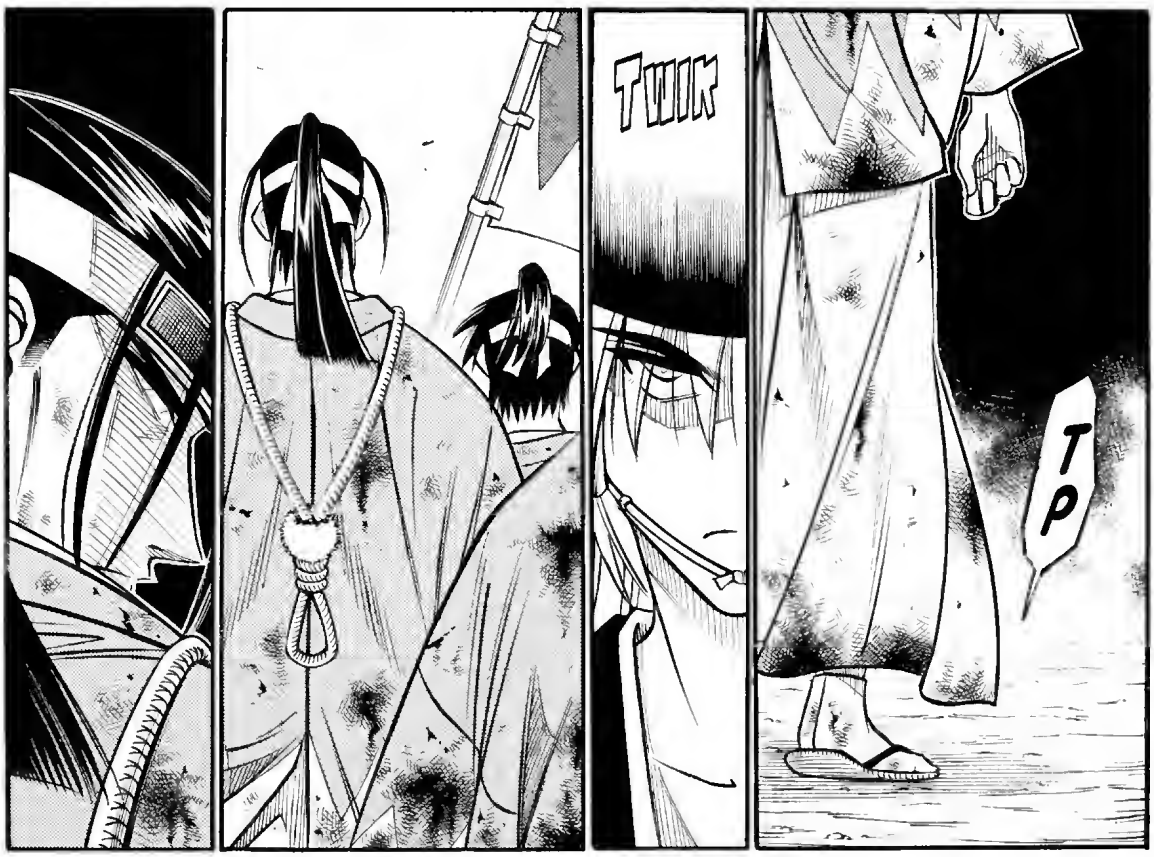
I'IZUKA WAS—
SHH!
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
HIMURA !!
KATAKAI-SAN. WHY ARE YOU HERE?
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE GUARDING KATSURA-SAN AT—
THE MEETING AT IKEDA-YA WAS ATTACKED!
THE LOCATION WAS LEAKED!!
THE MIBU WOLVES—THE SHINSENGUMI!!

BUT YOSHIDA-SAN... MIYABE-SENSEI... AND THE REST OF THEM...
HE WAS RUNNING EARLY, SO HE RAN AN ERRAND AT TSUSHIMA PARTY HEAD-QUARTERS.
HE WAS TAKING A CATNAP WHEN IKEDA-YA WAS ATTACKED!
WHAT ABOUT KATSURA-SAN?!
YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT IF YOU LEAVE NOW!
IT'S TOO LATE!!
HIMURA! WAIT!
VSH
ATTACKING NOW WILL ONLY HURT THE CHŌSHŪ PARTY!!
THERE ARE ALREADY 3,000 SHŌGUNATE SOLDIERS HEADING THAT WAY!

FOUNDING YEAR OF GENJI. JUNE 5TH.
NIGHT OF THE IKEDA-YA INCIDENT.
池田屋
新撰組
THE TRIUMPH—
凱旋!!
OF THE SHINSENGUMI!!

賀加
TP
YADA
YADA
TP
TP
TP

...WHO POSE THE GREATEST OBSTACLE FOR THE REVOLUTION.
SHINSEN-GUMI...THE MEN...

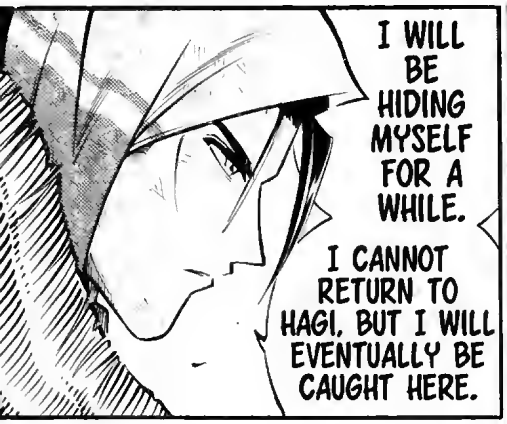

TWIK
TP

GRIN
IT'S... NOTHING, OKITA-KUN.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, SAITŌ-SAN?
HE AND I... ARE GOING TO HAVE A LONG RELATIONSHIP...

WORD SPREADS OF THE SLAUGHTER...
THEN...
WITH MADNESS KNOWING NO BOUNDS, THEY MARCH TOWARD KYOTO WITH 3,000 SOLDIERS.
...DISTORTED BY EXAGGERATIONS AND ERRORS, UNTIL IT SPARKS A BLAZE OF RAGE IN CHŌSHŪ.
AGAINST THEM, THE SHOGUN SENDS AN ARMY OF 20,000.
THE END IS SETTLED BEFORE THE FIGHT BEGINS.
誠

MANY REVOLUTIONISTS, INCLUDING KENSHIN, FIGHT THEIR HARDEST BUT CANNOT TURN THE TIDE.
FOUNDING YEAR OF GENJI. JULY 8TH. THE KINMON INCIDENT.
FIRE IS SET TO 28,000 HOMES, DRIVING VICTIMS INTO THE STREETS OF THE CITY.
IN ONE DAY OF FIGHTING, CHŌSHŪ'S CASUALTIES NUMBER 400... AGAINST 60 FOR THE SHŌGUNATE.

KATAGAI-SAN SAID IT WAS ORDAINED BY THE HEAVENS THAT YOU WERE THE ONLY SURVIVOR.
YOU WERE AGAINST SUCH AN ATROCITY.
...WAS INTENDED TO PLAN THE RETRIEVAL OF THE EMPEROR DURING THE CHAOS CREATED BY SETTING FIRE TO KYOTO.
THAT ILL-FATED MEETING AT IKEDA-YA...


I WILL BE HIDING MYSELF FOR A WHILE.
I CANNOT RETURN TO HAGI, BUT I WILL EVENTUALLY BE CAUGHT HERE.

WHAT WILL I DO?
THE KOHAGI-YA HAS BEEN BURNT DOWN.

BUT LOOK AT ME NOW...
THE CHŌSHŪ PARTY IS NEAR ANNIHILATION, AND BEING CHASED DOWN AS THE ENEMY OF THE EMPEROR.
THE CONSERVATIVES HAVE REGAINED POWER IN HAGI, THE PARTY'S CAPITAL.

TOMOE-KUN.
YES?

WHP
I'VE PREPARED A HOUSE IN A FARM VILLAGE OUTSIDE KYOTO.
LAY LOW UNTIL OUR NEXT ACTION IS DECIDED.
I WILL CONTACT YOU THROUGH I'IZUKA.

IF YOU HAVE NOWHERE TO GO...
...I'D LIKE YOU TO LIVE THERE WITH HIMURA.
A YOUNG COUPLE BLENDS IN MORE EASILY THAN A YOUNG MAN.
THE ARRANGE-MENT CAN BE ENTIRELY FOR APPEAR-ANCES.
SHK
TAKE CARE...
...OF HIMURA.
...

IF YOU NEED TRAVEL FUNDS, I'LL PROVIDE THEM.
EVERYONE HAS SOMEWHERE TO GO.
I DON'T HAVE ANYWHERE TO GO...
WHAT SHALL WE DO?
I DON'T WANT IT JUST FOR APPEARANCES.
I WANT YOU WITH ME...
I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I CAN BE WITH YOU, BUT...
STAY WITH ME.
...I KNOW.
THAT'S THE COWARD'S WAY OUT.

...UNTIL DEATH PARTS US.

HAGI, CHŌSHŪ.
HE GOT MARRIED?! BUT HE'S BARELY GROWN UP!
WAHAHAHAHA!
THAT IS FUNNY!!
YAMAGATA KYŌSUKE (LATER YAMAGATA ARITOMO).
THESE ARE DARK TIMES. WHAT IS HE THINKING?
THIS IS NO LAUGHING MATTER, SHINSAKU!
KATSURA-SAN AND A HITOKIRI ARE IN VERY DIFFERENT POSITIONS.
KOF
KOGORŌ, AS GRIM AS HE SEEMS...
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, KYŌSUKE?
...IS ALSO RELAXING WITH HIS IKUMATSU.
NOT SO DIFFER-ENT.

AFTER I'M GONE, KATSURA AND HIMURA WILL BOTH BE DEFENDERS OF THE NEW ERA.
HOW CAN YOU TRUST THE NATION TO A MAN WHO WON'T TAKE CARE OF THE WOMAN HE LOVES?
HIMURA! LEAVE HAGI UP TO ME!
WA HA HA HA HA HA HA
DON'T YOU LET GO OF THAT WOMAN AND KYOTO EVEN IF IT MEANS YOUR LIFE!!
SHINSAKU, ARE YOUR LUNGS...?
AFTER YOU'RE GONE...?
DO YOU THINK I WOULD LET MYSELF DIE AFTER THEY'VE THROWN ME IN HERE FOR TRYING TO LEAVE THE FACTION?!
DON'T WORRY, KYŌSUKE.
I'M NOT PLANNING TO DIE YET.
SLAP

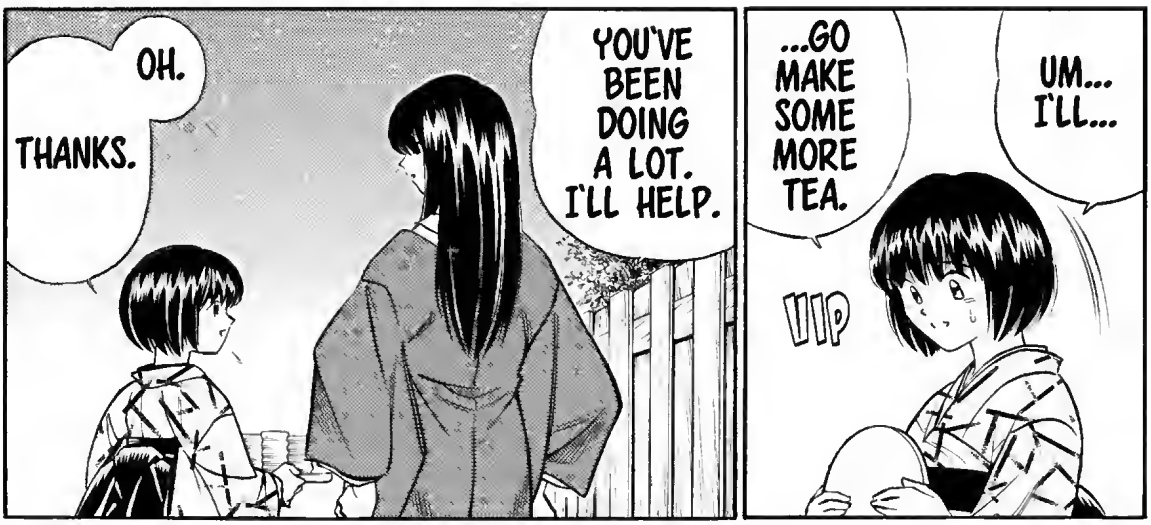
AMID SUCH TURNING POINTS THE TWO BEGAN THEIR NEW LIFE TOGETHER.
KATSURA KOGORŌ'S DOWNFALL.
TAKASUGI SHINSAKU'S DISEASE.
FOUNDING YEAR OF GENJI, MIDSUMMER.
KENSHIN FIFTEEN. TOMOE EIGHTEEN.

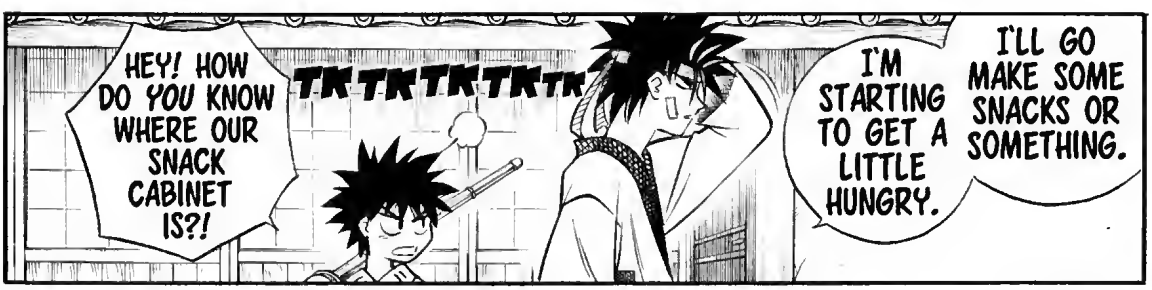
Rurouni
Kenshin

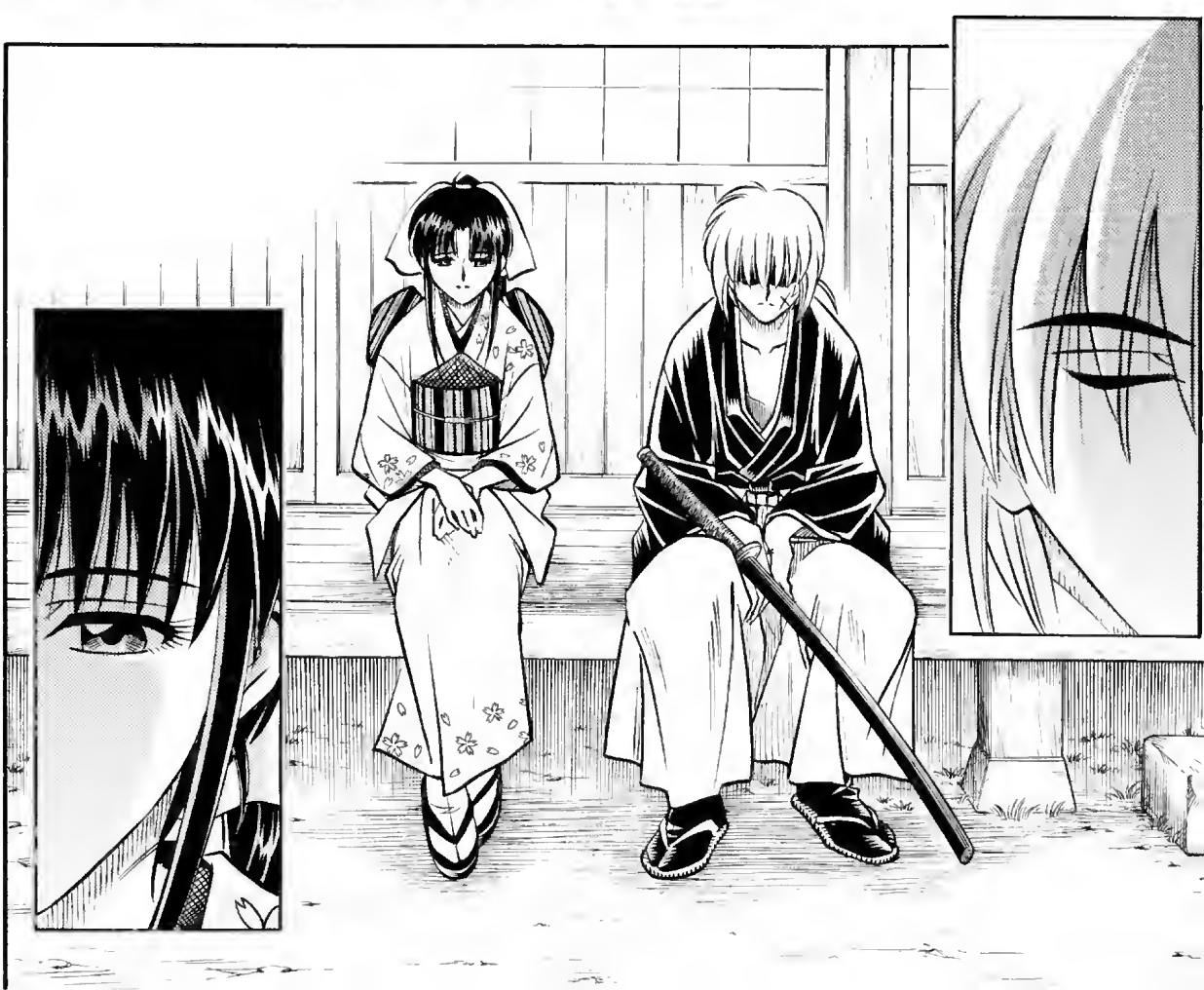
Act 171
Brief Inter-mission
RUROUNI KENSHIN
HIMURA TOMOE

TK
TK
...

LET'S...
...REST AWHILE ...
...KEN-SAN?
YOU'VE BEEN TALKING FOR THREE HOURS STRAIGHT NOW.
...ALL RIGHT.
...


OH.
THANKS.
YOU'VE BEEN DOING A LOT. I'LL HELP.
...GO MAKE SOME MORE TEA.
VIP
UM... I'LL...

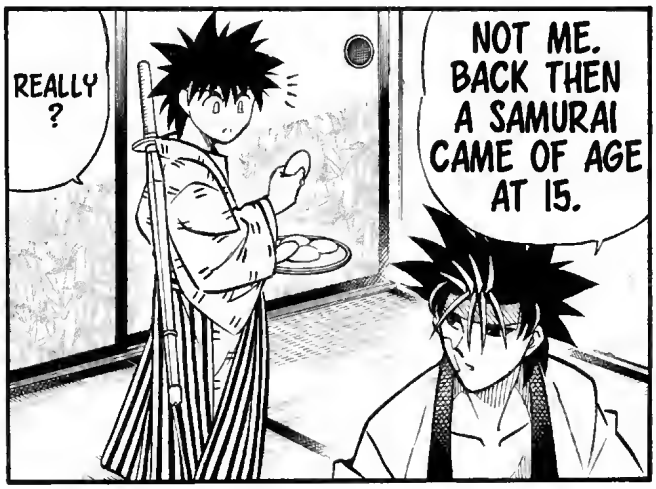

HEY! HOW DO YOU KNOW WHERE OUR SNACK CABINET IS?!
TK TK TK TK TK
I'M STARTING TO GET A LITTLE HUNGRY.
I'LL GO MAKE SOME SNACKS OR SOMETHING.



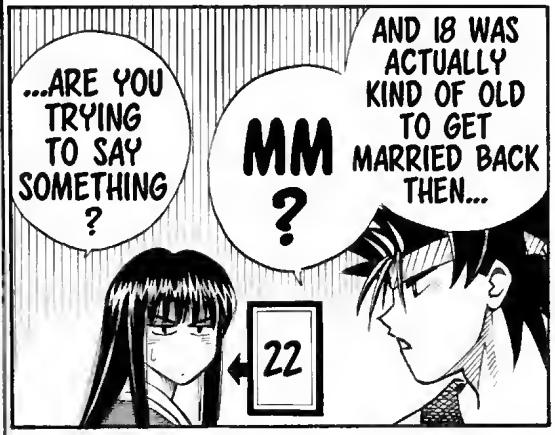
...I WAS SURPRISED TO HEAR KENSHIN-SAN WAS A HITOKIRI.
YEAH? YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT BATTŌSAI?
BLUP
BLUP

A CEREMONY CALLED GENPUKU.
IF YOU PLAN TO BE A SWORDSMAN, REMEMBER IT.

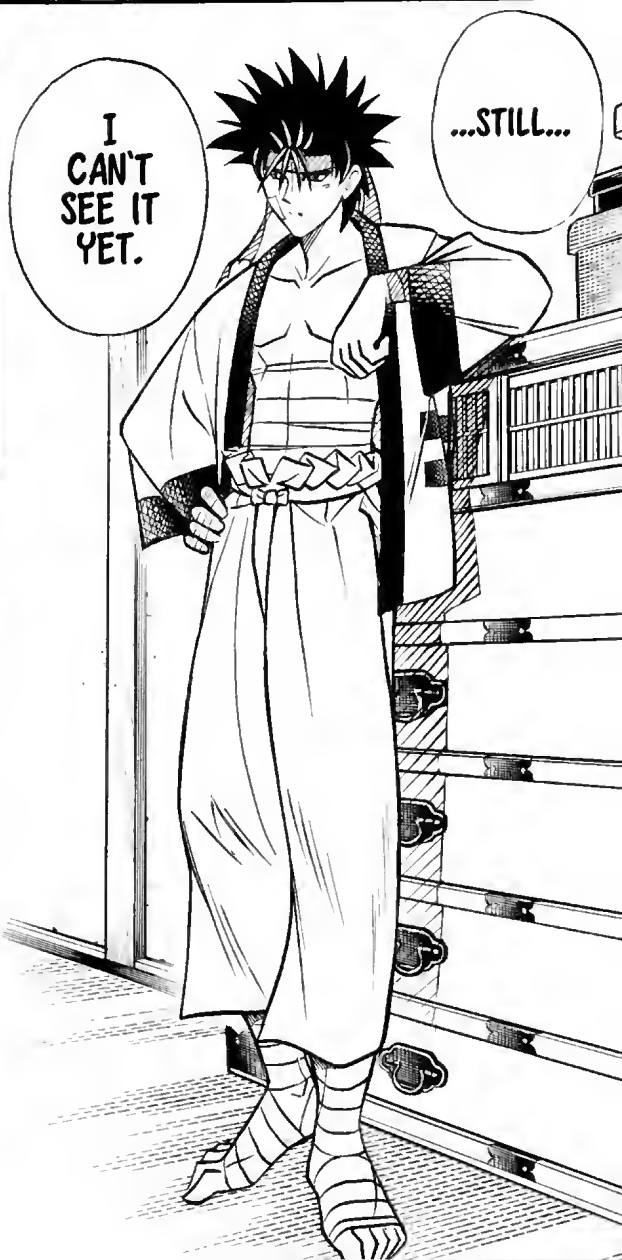
I'M SURPRISED TO HEAR HE WAS MARRIED!
AND AT 15!
OH!


NOT ME. BACK THEN A SAMURAI CAME OF AGE AT 15.
REALLY ?

HMPH
SUCH THINGS SHOULD BE UP TO THE INDIVIDUAL!
WHY SHOULD ANYONE ELSE HAVE AN OPINION ON IT?!
I SAID, "NOT A THING."


AND 18 WAS ACTUALLY KIND OF OLD TO GET MARRIED BACK THEN...
MM?
...ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY SOMETHING?
22

NOT A THING.

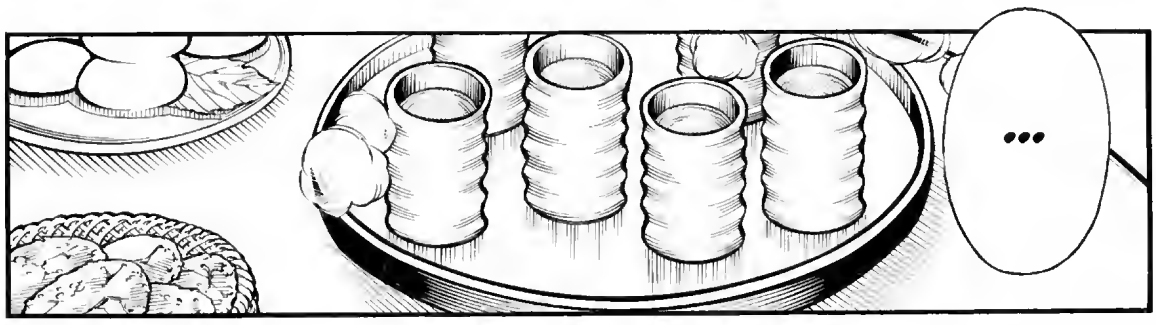

I CAN'T SEE IT YET.
...STILL...

WHAT?

DON'T IGNORE ME!
HEY!
SO YOU THINK SO TOO?
TRUE.

YUKISHIO...
...OR HIMURA.
...TOMOE...
IT'S THE MIDDLE OF THE STORY, SO WE CAN'T KNOW YET...
BUT HER BACK-GROUND... HER IDENTITY ...
...EVEN HER THOUGHTS ARE SUCH MYSTERIES.
I HAVE TO WONDER...
...WHETHER SHE REALLY LOVED KEN-SAN OR NOT.

BUT SHE MUST HAVE.
HOW COULD YOU MARRY SOMEONE YOU DON'T EVEN LOVE?
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT KENSHIN ENDED UP KILLING HER.
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS... YOUR OWN WIFE...


...

UM... SHALL WE HEAD BACK?
I'M WORRIED ABOUT KAORU-SAN...
MM. GOOD POINT.
I'LL NEVER FORGIVE HER IF SHE LETS SOMETHING LIKE THIS BREAK HER.
HUH?
CHIRIN
NEVER MIND. LET'S GO BACK.

YES.
IN TEN DAYS?
I DECLARED IT THIS MORNING.
I DON'T MIND. I DON'T LIKE MAKING SMALL MOVES ANYWAY.
HA-HAAA!!
WITHOUT CONSULTING YOUR COMRADES?
I DON'T LIKE IT.

WHY SHOULD WE WAIT SO LONG?
DECLARING WAR IS FINE...
...BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE TEN DAYS.
GRIN
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF HE'S ALONE OR WITH HIS FRIENDS...
BATTŌSAI AT FULL STRENGTH WAS A LEGEND THROUGH THE BAKUMATSU AND MEIJI.
WHEN WE FIGHT, IT WILL BE AN ALL-OUT WAR.
NOT EVEN THE MOST PASSIVE MAN WOULD PULL HIS PUNCHES.
OUR NEXT STRIKE IS AT THEIR HEAD-QUARTERS.

SO...I THOUGHT A BIT OF HELP FOR MY COMRADES WOULD BE IN ORDER.
I'VE CALLED FOR MY BEST MEN FROM SHANGHAI.
BUT IT'LL TAKE TEN DAYS TO BRING THEM ALL HERE.
KRI!!
YOU'RE CONTRA-DICTING YOURSELF.

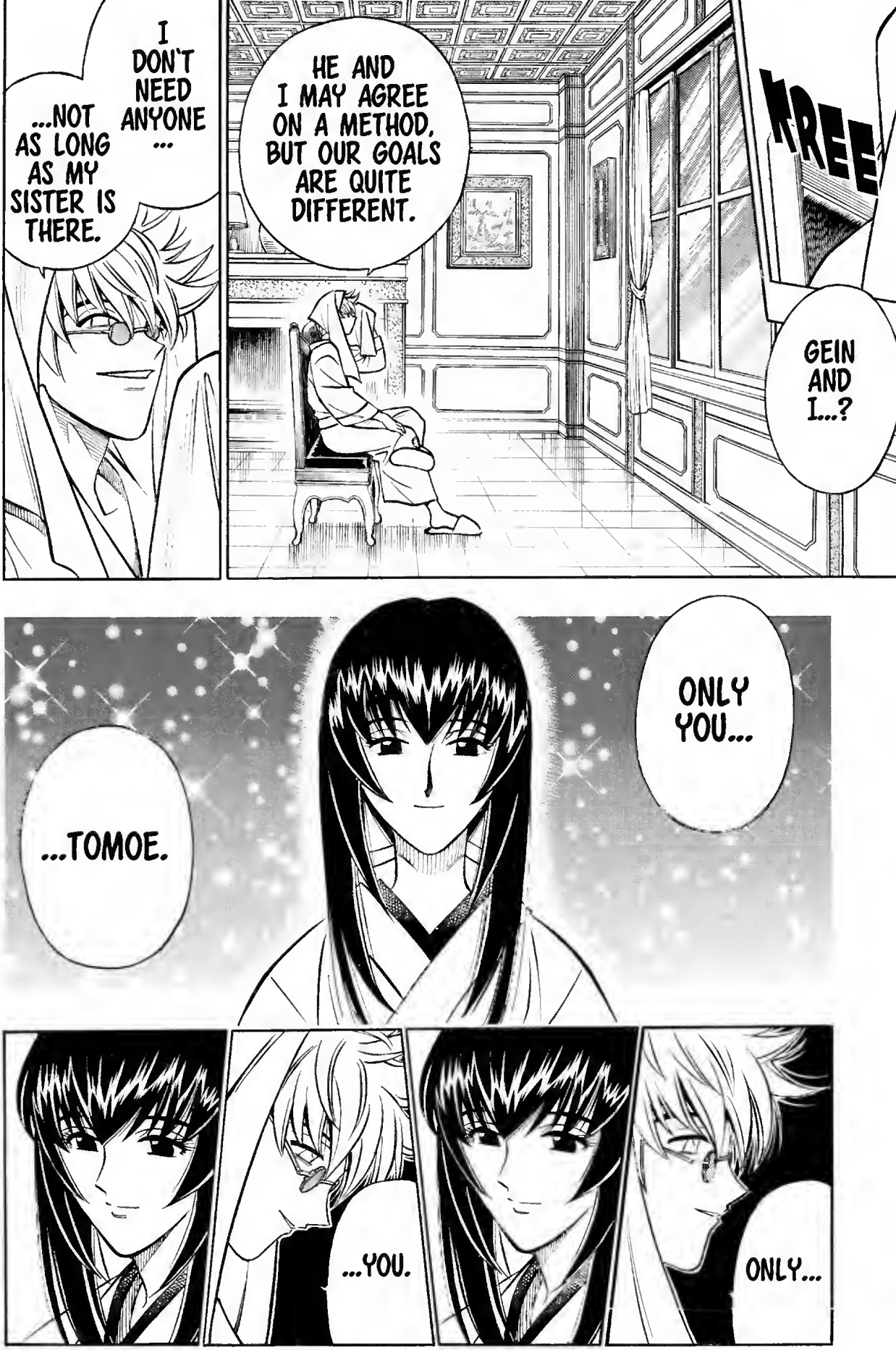
OUR RULE WAS, "WHEN BATTŌSAI TURNS AND FIGHTS, THIS BECOMES A FREE-FOR-ALL."
WHICH MEANS THAT WHEN HE FIGHTS—WE BECOME ENEMIES.

"SENDING SALT TO THE ENEMY."
A NOBLE OLD CUSTOM.
GLINT
BAM
...HMPH.
I'LL LET THAT GO.

I DON'T CARE WHAT THAT MAN'S PLOTTING. TEN DAYS FROM NOW, BATTŌSAI'S HEAD...
IS MINE !!

...SIGH.
A BATTLE OF WITS BETWEEN A FOX AND A TANUKI GETS OLD QUICKLY.
AH. YOU HEARD THAT TOO, MUMYŌI-SAN?
TEN DAYS. DON'T FORGET.
ZP
KATA
A SHARP ONE.

ENISHI, WHAT ARE YOU PLOTTING?
WHAT'S GEIN MAKING IN THE BASEMENT, WHERE THERE'S NO CEILING SPACE FOR ME TO CRAWL IN?
I'M NOT GOING TO YELL IT UP THERE, MUMYŌI-SAN.
BUT...
GLARE
HEH
YOU CAN COME DOWN AND MEET ME FACE TO FACE.
THIS IS A WARNING. I DON'T CARE WHAT GEIN AND YOU ARE PLOTTING TOGETHER.
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF GETTING IN YOUR WAY.
BUT DO NOT GET IN MY WAY EITHER. BECAUSE I'M GOING TO KILL BATTŌSAI...
TKK
...THE ONLY MAN WHO EVER WITNESSED MY APPEARANCE AND LIVED.


I DON'T NEED ANYONE ...
...NOT AS LONG AS MY SISTER IS THERE.
HE AND I MAY AGREE ON A METHOD, BUT OUR GOALS ARE QUITE DIFFERENT.
GEIN AND I...?
ONLY YOU...
...TOMOE.
...YOU.
ONLY...

WHY DID YOU DIE...
WHY?
...MY SISTER?

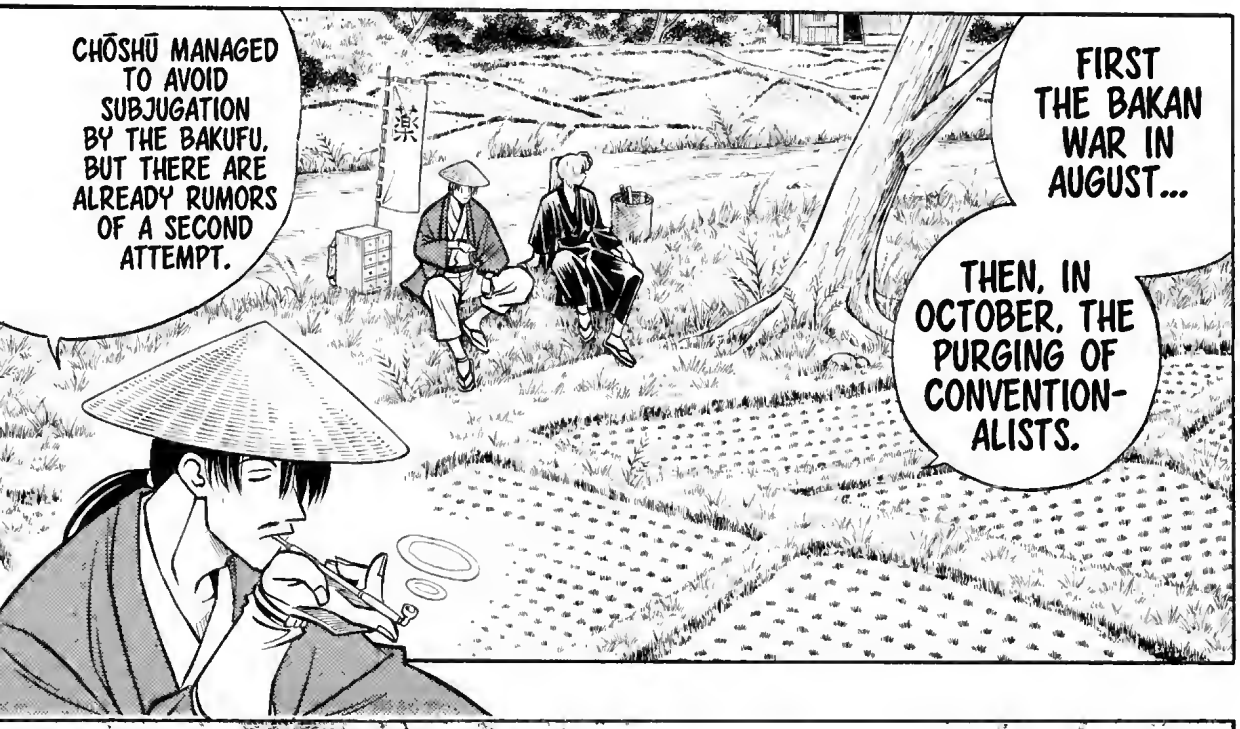
SO LET'S HEAR IT.
...
...
KENSHIN ...
KAORU-SAN?
SS

READ THIS WAY
PLEASE...
TELL US THE REST.
...ALL RIGHT.
LET'S...
...CON-TINUE...

Act 172

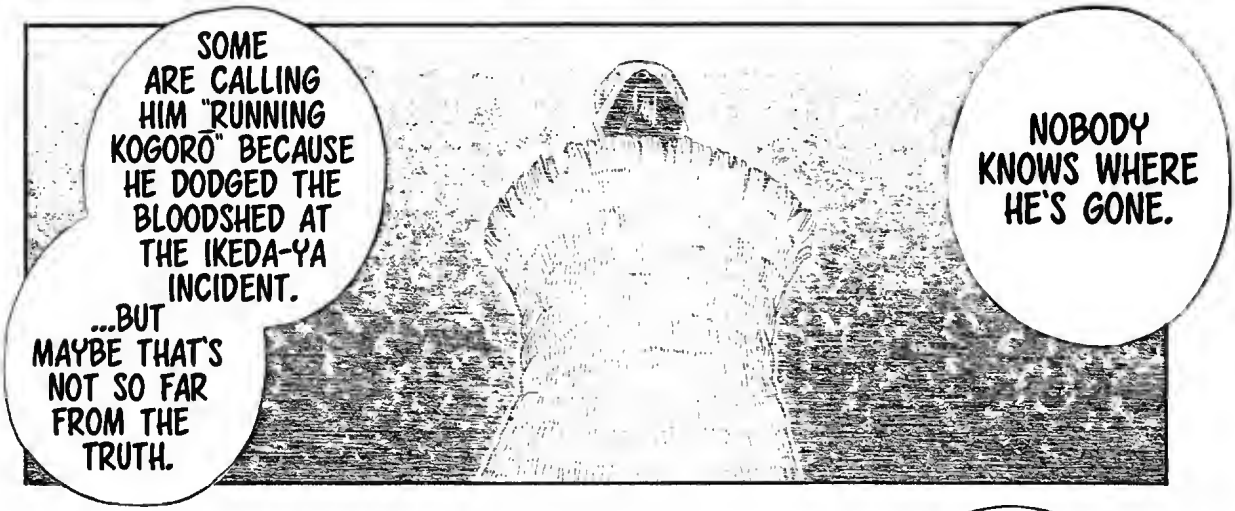
Remembrance 7: By the Farmlands

A COLD DECEMBER.
THE LAST DAYS OF THE FOUNDING YEAR OF GENJI.
FIVE MONTHS SINCE THE KINMON INCIDENT.


CHŌSHŪ MANAGED TO AVOID SUBJUGATION BY THE BAKUFU. BUT THERE ARE ALREADY RUMORS OF A SECOND ATTEMPT.
FIRST THE BAKAN WAR IN AUGUST...
THEN, IN OCTOBER, THE PURGING OF CONVENTION-ALISTS.

CHŌSHŪ IS NOW IN A STATE OF CIVIL WAR.
THEN ON THE 15TH OF THIS MONTH, TAKASUGI, UNABLE TO CONTAIN HIMSELF ANY LONGER, STOOD UP WITH HIS KIHEI ARMY TO REGAIN CONTROL OF THE PARTY'S GOVERNMENT.

...ANY NEWS FROM KATSURA-SAN?
NOTHING. AGAIN.
OR LET'S JUST SAY I CAN'T CONTACT HIM.

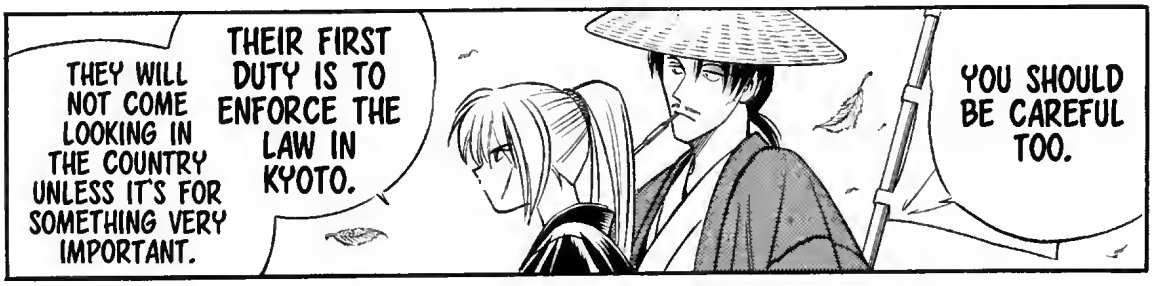

NOBODY KNOWS WHERE HE'S GONE.
SOME ARE CALLING HIM "RUNNING KOGORŌ" BECAUSE HE DODGED THE BLOODSHED AT THE IKEDA-YA INCIDENT.
...BUT MAYBE THAT'S NOT SO FAR FROM THE TRUTH.

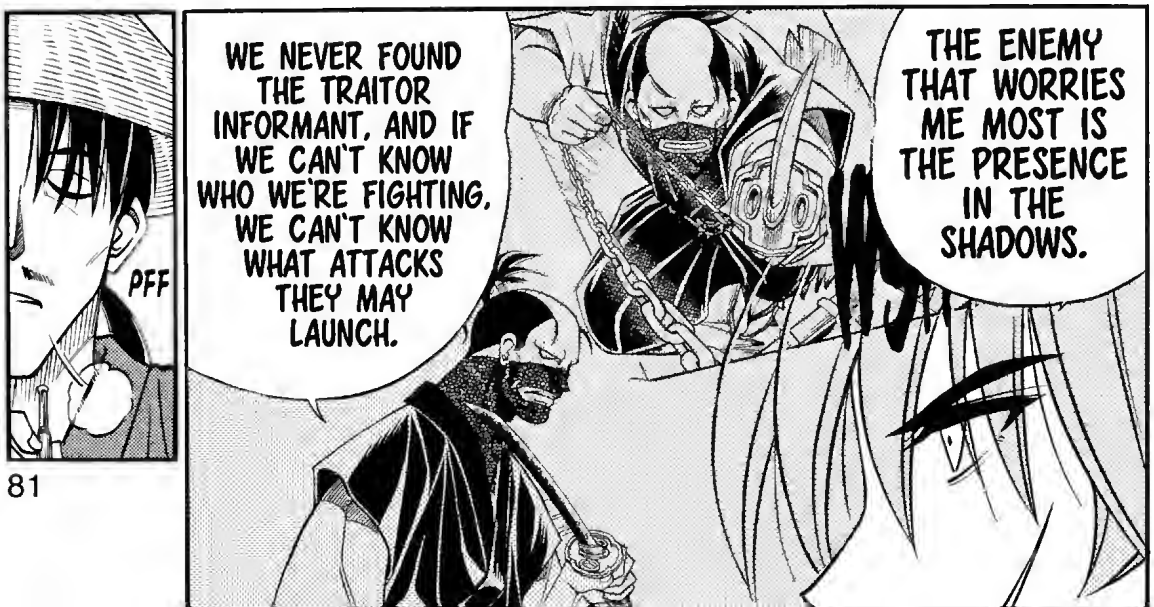
I DON'T BELIEVE IT.
TAKASUGI-SAN WILL WIN.
AND KATSURA-SAN WILL RETURN.

TP

CHŌSHŪ IS FINISHED.

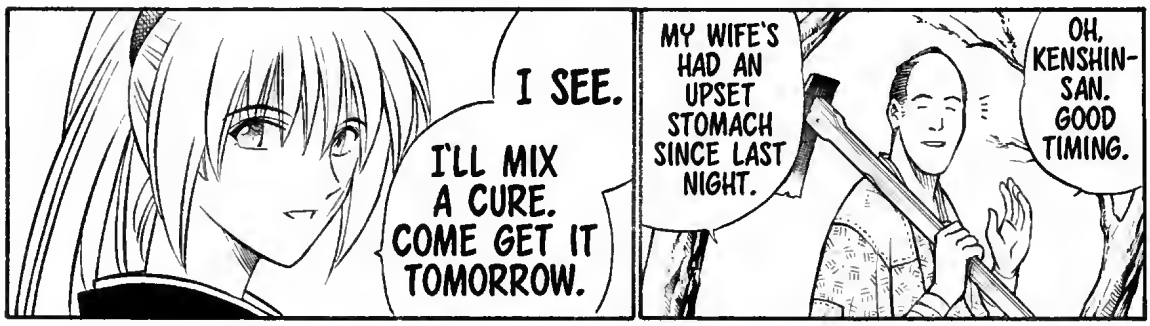
IT'S THE SHINSENGUMI'S WORLD NOW. PACKS OF WOLVES IN LIGHT BLUE JACKETS AND "MOUNTAIN STRIPES" PROWLING FOR REVOLUTIONARIES.
MEANWHILE, THE KYOTO MIMAWARIGUMI AND OTHER SHŌGUNATE ARMIES ARE COMPETING WITH THEM. IT'S A BLOODY CAPITAL.
HOW IS THE CITY?
MM?
OH. PRETTY GRUESOME.

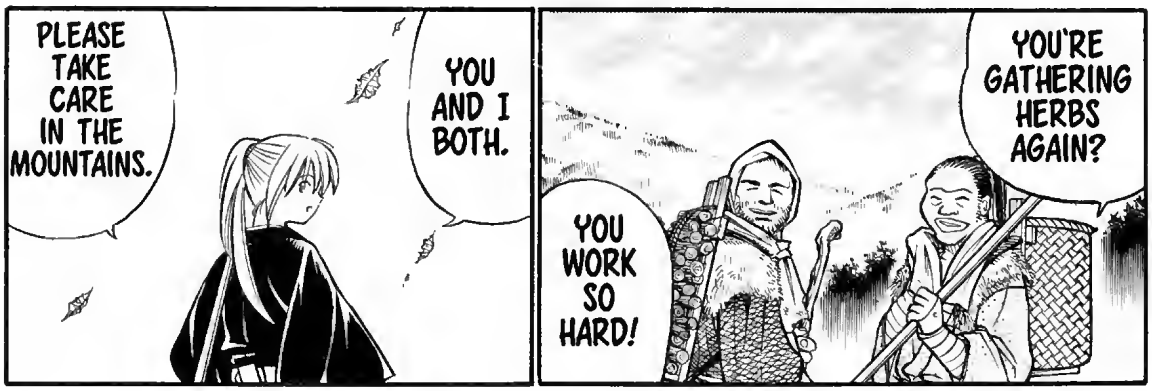

THEY WILL NOT COME LOOKING IN THE COUNTRY UNLESS IT'S FOR SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT.
THEIR FIRST DUTY IS TO ENFORCE THE LAW IN KYOTO.
YOU SHOULD BE CAREFUL TOO.


PFF
WE NEVER FOUND THE TRAITOR INFORMANT, AND IF WE CAN'T KNOW WHO WE'RE FIGHTING, WE CAN'T KNOW WHAT ATTACKS THEY MAY LAUNCH.
THE ENEMY THAT WORRIES ME MOST IS THE PRESENCE IN THE SHADOWS.

AREN'T YOU GOING STALE??
HOW ABOUT YOU?
PEH. ALL THIS STALE TALK...
...IS MAKING ME FEEL STALE TOO.
TUG
THANKS TO YOU.
HEH
...LIVING IN LUKEWARM WATER AWAY FROM YOUR HITOKIRI LIFE.
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE STARTING TO GET BORED...
YOU SEEM LIKE YOU STILL HAVE ENERGY LEFT.

...THAT'S NOT TRUE.
I LOVE KENJUTSU, BUT NOT KILLING.
HSH
AND THESE FIVE MONTHS HAVE BEEN ANYTHING BUT BORING. SO MANY EYE-OPENING MOMENTS...
HO! THE MEDICINE MERCHANT AGAIN!
HELLO!
BUYING NEW MEDICINE?
YOU TRAVEL A LONG WAY!
MM. THE MEDICINE KENSHIN-SAN MAKES IS POPULAR FOR SWORD WOUNDS...

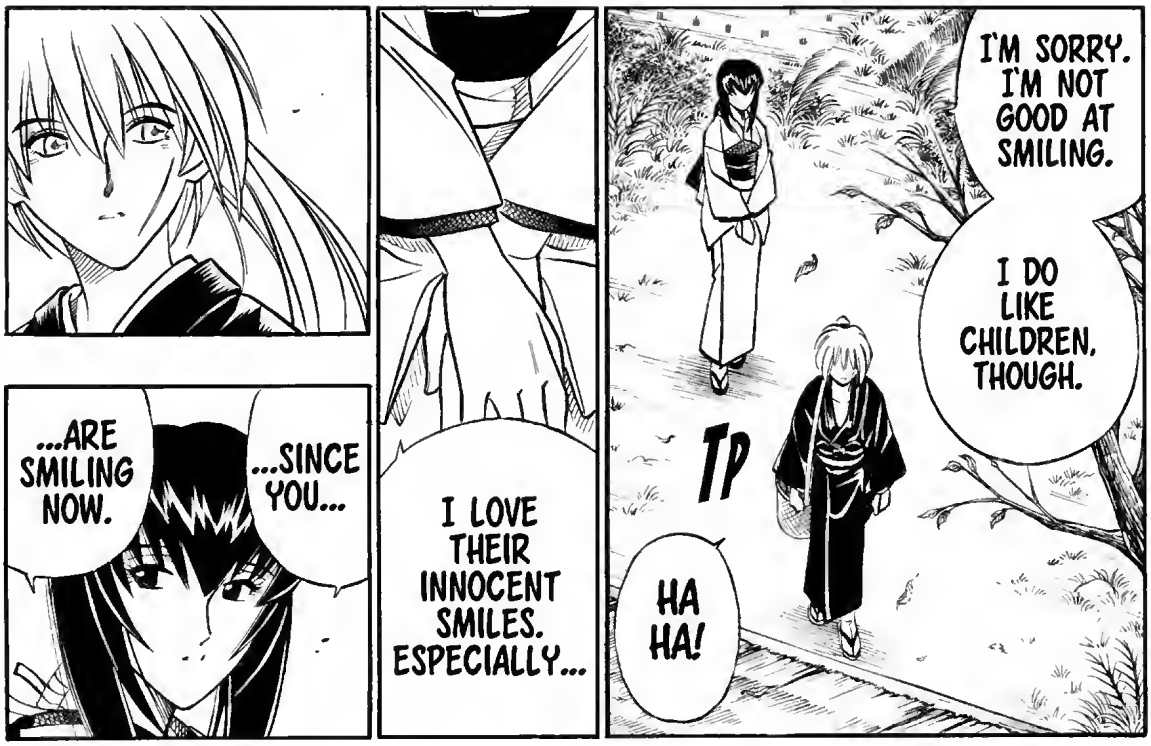

I SEE.
I'LL MIX A CURE. COME GET IT TOMORROW.
MY WIFE'S HAD AN UPSET STOMACH SINCE LAST NIGHT.
OH, KENSHIN-SAN. GOOD TIMING.


PLEASE TAKE CARE IN THE MOUNTAINS.
YOU AND I BOTH.
YOU'RE GATHERING HERBS AGAIN?
YOU WORK SO HARD!

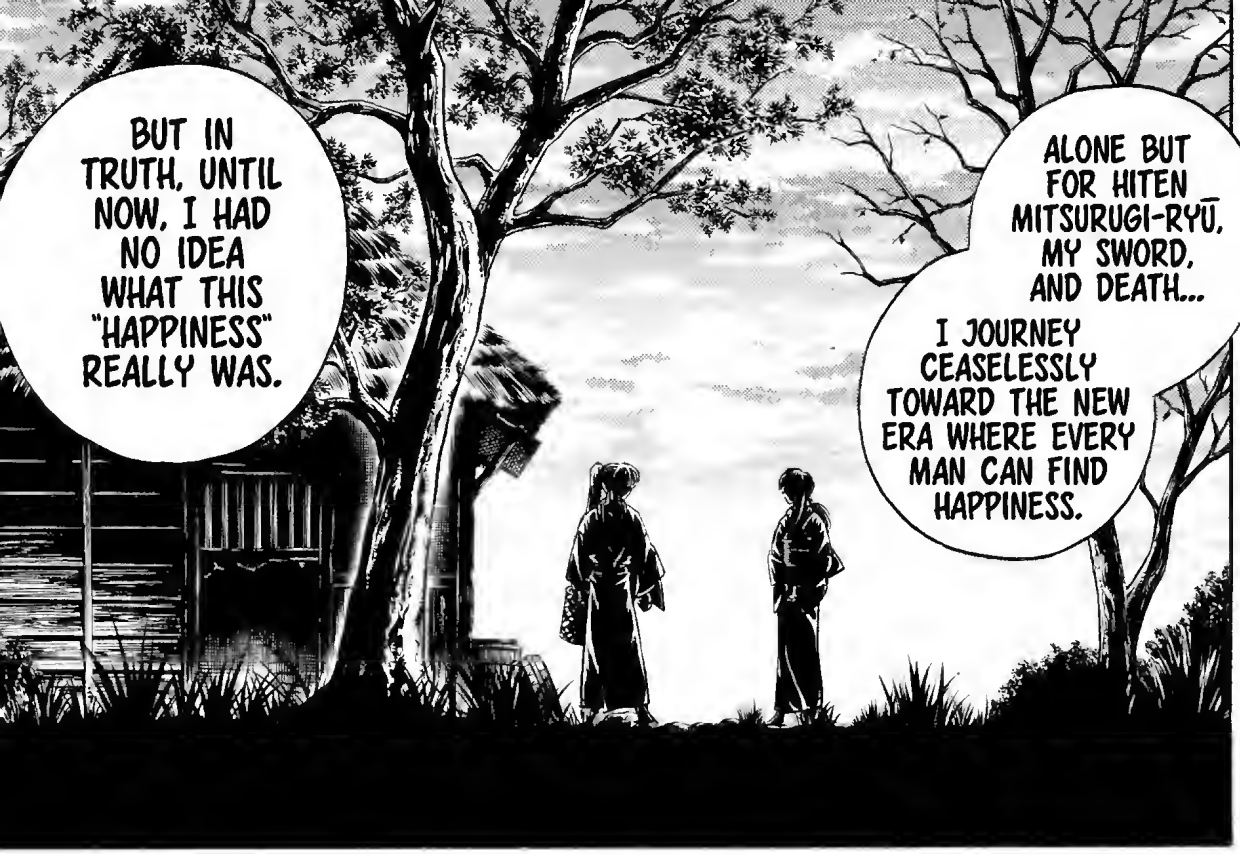
ONE...
TWO...
SYA
ARH
YAAA
YAAA
I'M HOME—
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?!
DONK!!
WELCOME HOME!
OH!!

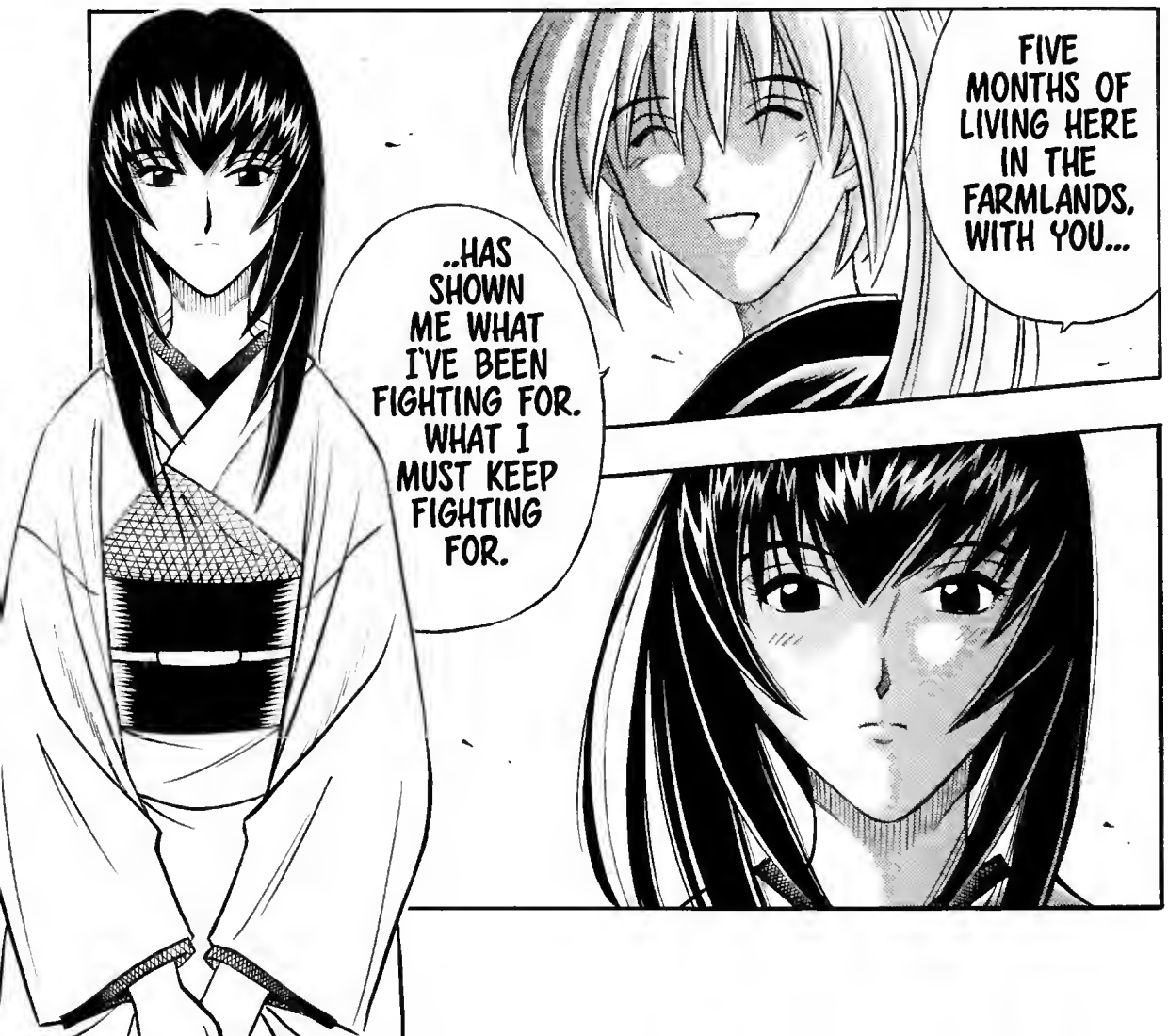
TNNG
SHE'S NO FUN!
SCARY, EVEN...
TNNG
TNNG
...
I WAS UP THE MOUNTAIN GATHERING HERBS. DIDN'T TOMOE PLAY WITH YOU?
SHE DID! BUT—
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
SIGH
YAK
YAK
YAK
DAD SAYS, "THAT MEDICINE MAN IS STRANGE."
"SO DON'T PLAY WITH HIM."
OH, REALLY ?

BUT MOM SAYS, "HE'S A GOOD MAN."
"HE TAKES CARE OF PEOPLE."
I SEE.
TOP
I'LL BE HOME ALL DAY TOMORROW.
COME OVER IN THE MORNING AND PLAY WITH EVERYONE.
NOW, IT'S LATE. YOU GO ON HOME.
SEE YOU TOMORROW !!


I'M SORRY. I'M NOT GOOD AT SMILING.
I DO LIKE CHILDREN, THOUGH.
TP
HA HA!
I LOVE THEIR INNOCENT SMILES. ESPECIALLY...
...SINCE YOU...
...ARE SMILING NOW.

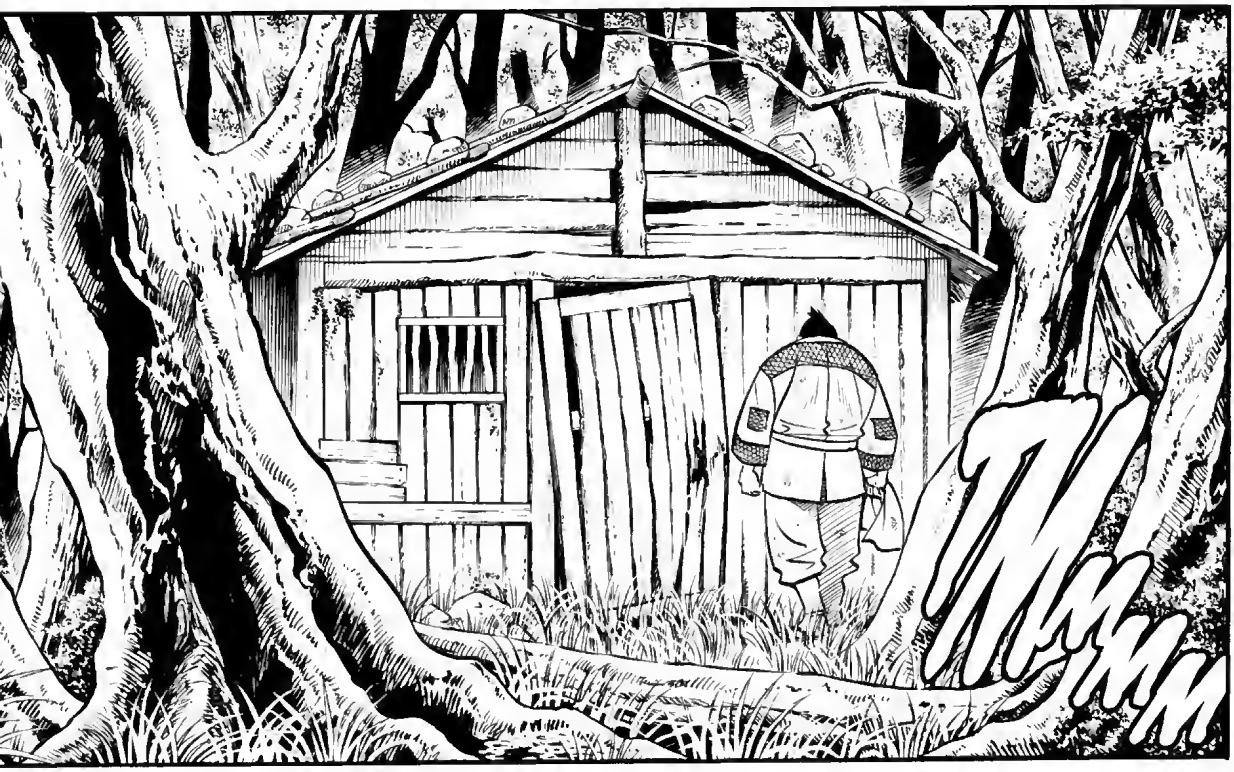
I WAS BORN INTO POVERTY, WORRYING ABOUT FOOD EVERY DAY. I LOST MY FAMILY.
AND AT TEN YEARS OLD I FOUND MYSELF TRAINING RELENTLESSLY IN HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ.
YOU'RE RIGHT...
—YES.
I'VE NEVER INITIATED A CONVERSATION WITH ANYONE.
NEVER EXCHANGED SMILES.
AND NOW, I AM A HITOKIRI OF CHŌSHŪ.


BUT IN TRUTH, UNTIL NOW, I HAD NO IDEA WHAT THIS "HAPPINESS" REALLY WAS.
ALONE BUT FOR HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ, MY SWORD, AND DEATH...
I JOURNEY CEASELESSLY TOWARD THE NEW ERA WHERE EVERY MAN CAN FIND HAPPINESS.


FIVE MONTHS OF LIVING HERE IN THE FARMLANDS, WITH YOU...
..HAS SHOWN ME WHAT I'VE BEEN FIGHTING FOR. WHAT I MUST KEEP FIGHTING FOR.

I KNOW THE BATTLE WILL RESUME EVENTUALLY ...
...BUT I HOPE I WILL AT LEAST BE ABLE TO WELCOME THE NEW YEAR LIKE THIS.
YAMMER
YAMMER
MMF. HOW LONG WILL THIS LIFE IN HIDING LAST?
SIGH
OH.
EVEN IF IT'S ONLY UNTIL KATSURA-SAN COMES BACK...

...
HE SAID HE'D BE STAYING AT HIMURA'S ...
WHSH
I'IZUKA. WHY'S HE IN THE CITY?

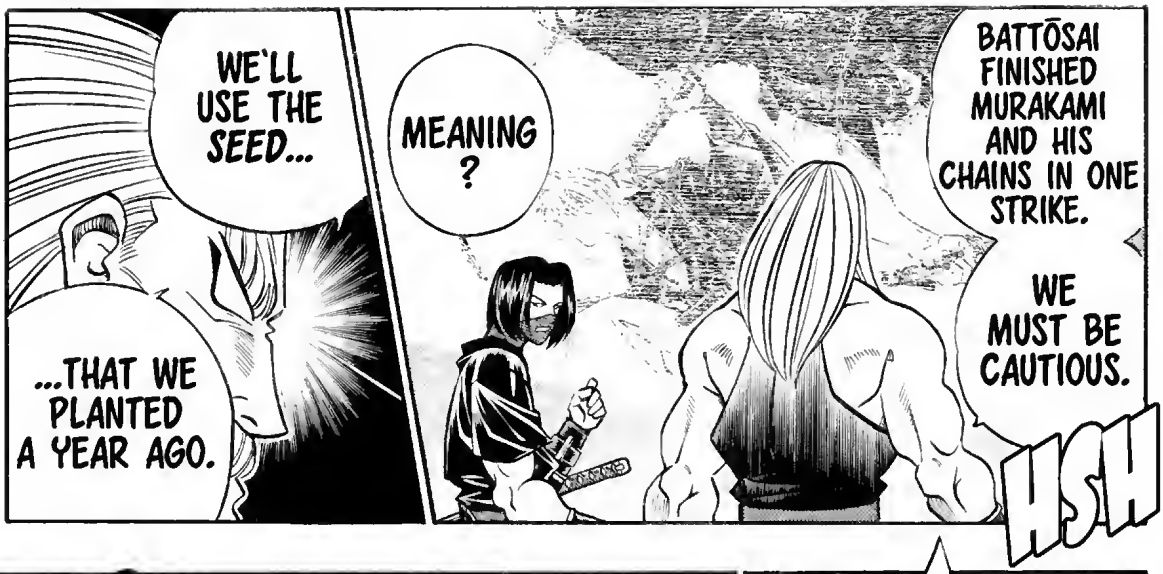


CHŌSHŪ IS NEARLY FINISHED.
!
I KNOW A LOT OF CHŌSHŪ HIDEOUTS, BUT...
...STRANGE.

I'IZUKA...! HE'S THE TRAITOR!!
HIS WITS HAVE DULLED IN THE PAST FIVE MONTHS. NOW WOULD BE A FINE TIME TO KILL HIM.
I LET KATSURA GO, BUT I STILL KNOW WHERE BATTŌSAI IS.

IF WE LOSE HIMURA NOW, CHŌSHŪ WON'T HAVE A CHANCE IN KYOTO!
I'VE GOT TO—
AGGGG
NNNG !!
WHAT —!
NNNG
YOU REALLY SHOULD HAVE A GUARD, YOU KNOW.
MUMYŌI!!

I'LL FINISH HIM!!
I'LL FINISH HIM!!
THE FOOL !!
GUH !!
THK
HA!!
HM. THAT'S AN INTERESTING WEAPON.
YEP. IT'S CALLED "CHŪSEN." I GOT IT FROM A FRIEND...
...WHO LOVES "SHADOW INSTRUMENTS."
THIS GUY IS KATSURA'S DIRECT SUBORDINATE.
KATAGAI...
THERE'LL BE TROUBLE WHEN THEY FIND OUT HE'S SUDDENLY GONE.
THEN WE HAVE NO CHOICE.
WE MUST LAUNCH OUR STRIKE ON BATTŌSAI!

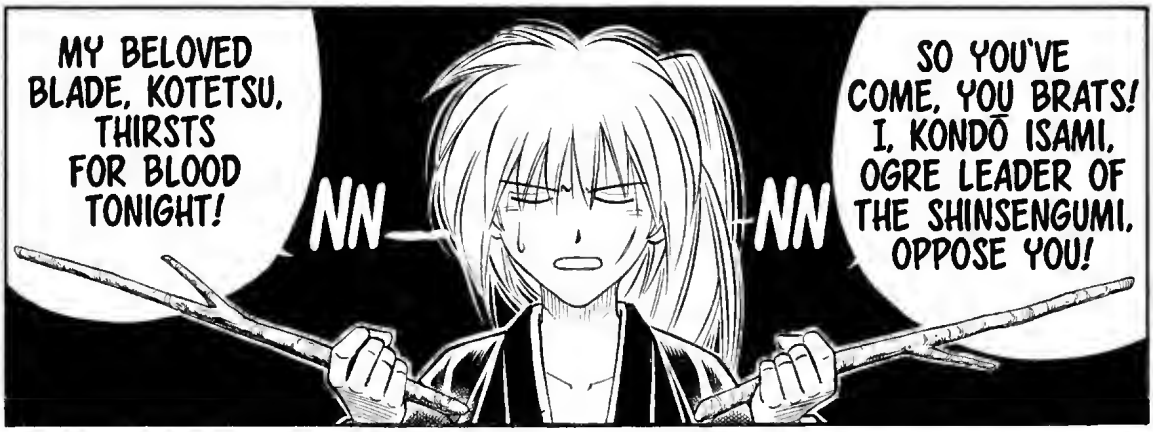

WE'LL USE THE SEED...
...THAT WE PLANTED A YEAR AGO.
MEANING ?
BATTŌSAI FINISHED MURAKAMI AND HIS CHAINS IN ONE STRIKE.
WE MUST BE CAUTIOUS.
HSH

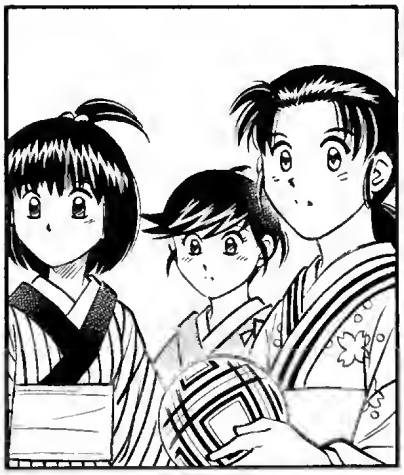
Hoooo
YOUR TIME—
HAS COME!!

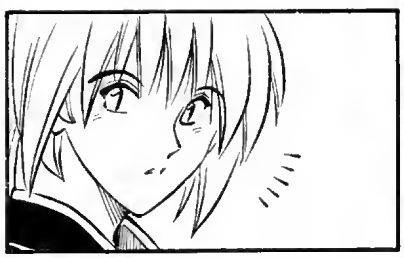
ENISHI!!

Rurouni Kenshin

Act 173—Remembrance 8: Arrival of Enishi

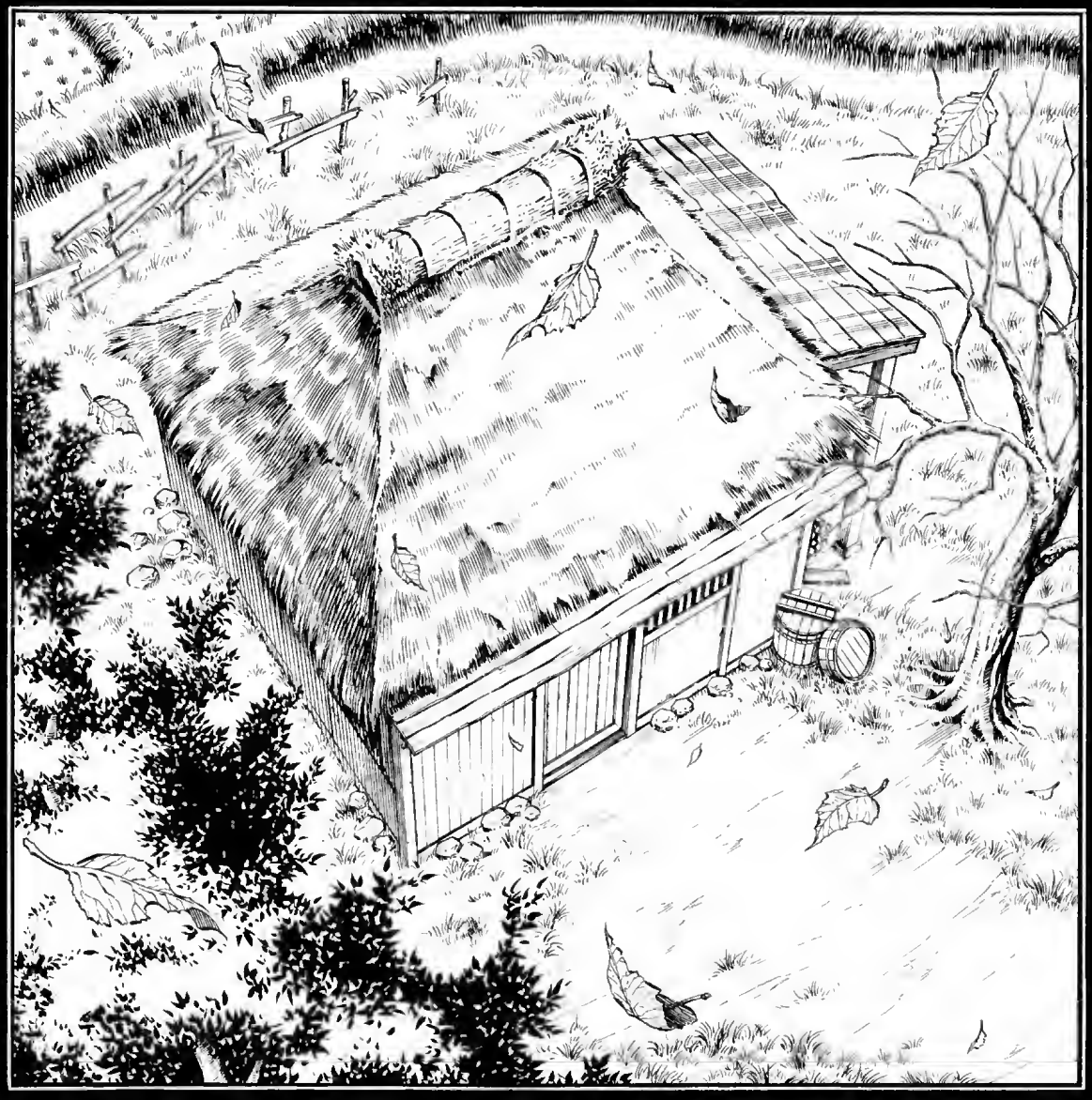






HYOOO
...
...
I'LL GO ASK HIM!
VSH
...WHO?
HE'S NOT FROM HERE.
DOES HE WANT TO PLAY TOO?

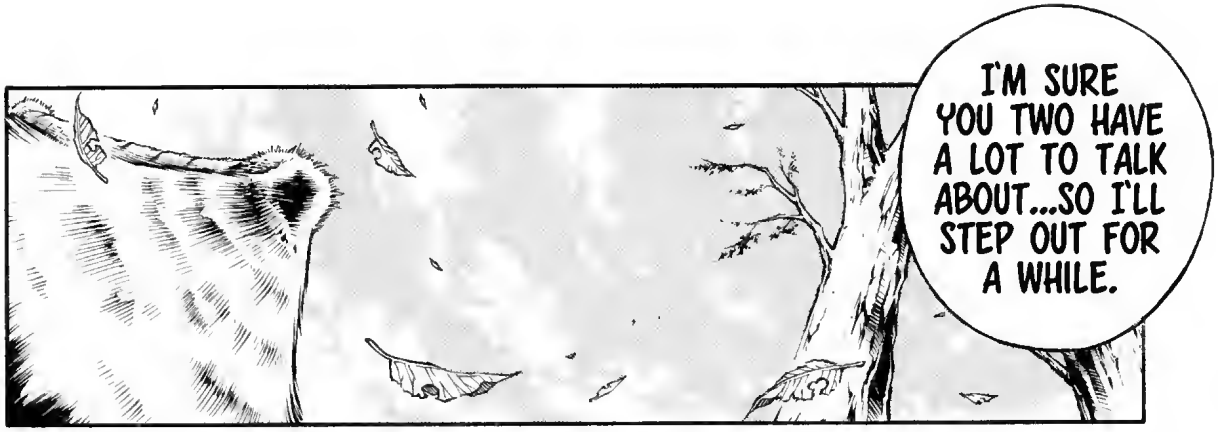
READ THIS WAY
HEY!!
GAH!
WOK
VSH
OWWW!!
GO
MP!!
IS IT... REALLY YOU?
ENISHI?!
SIS !!

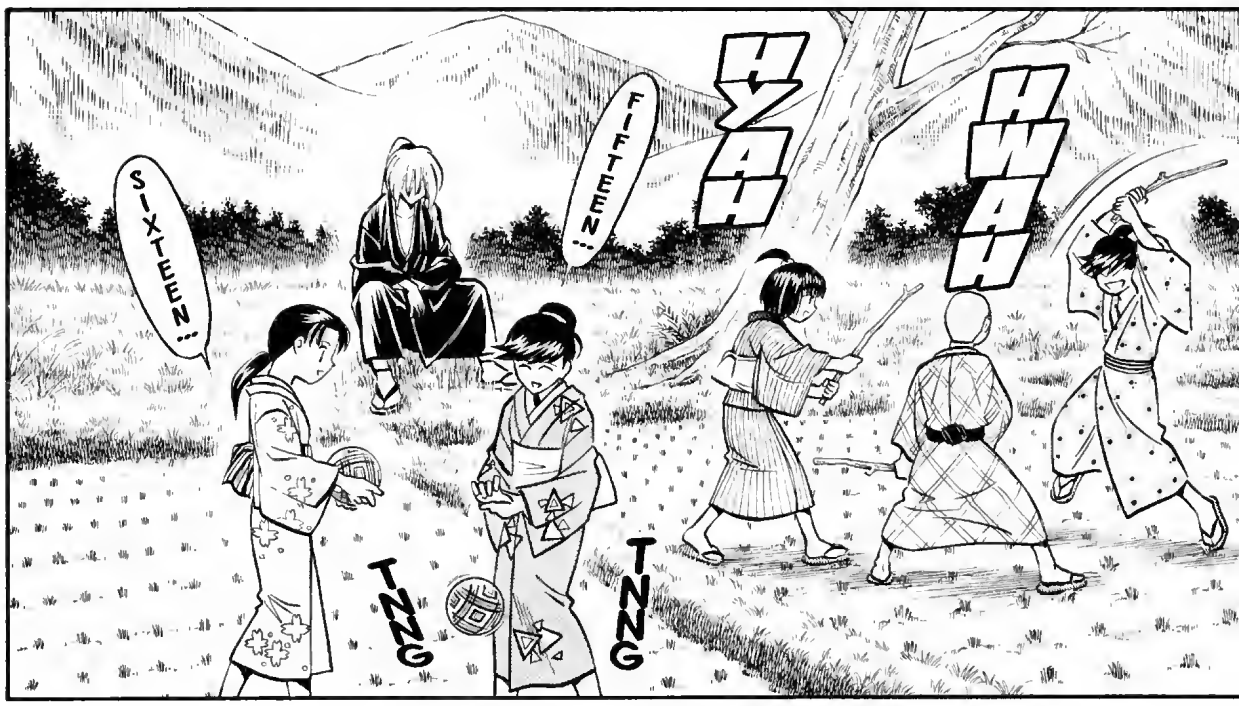


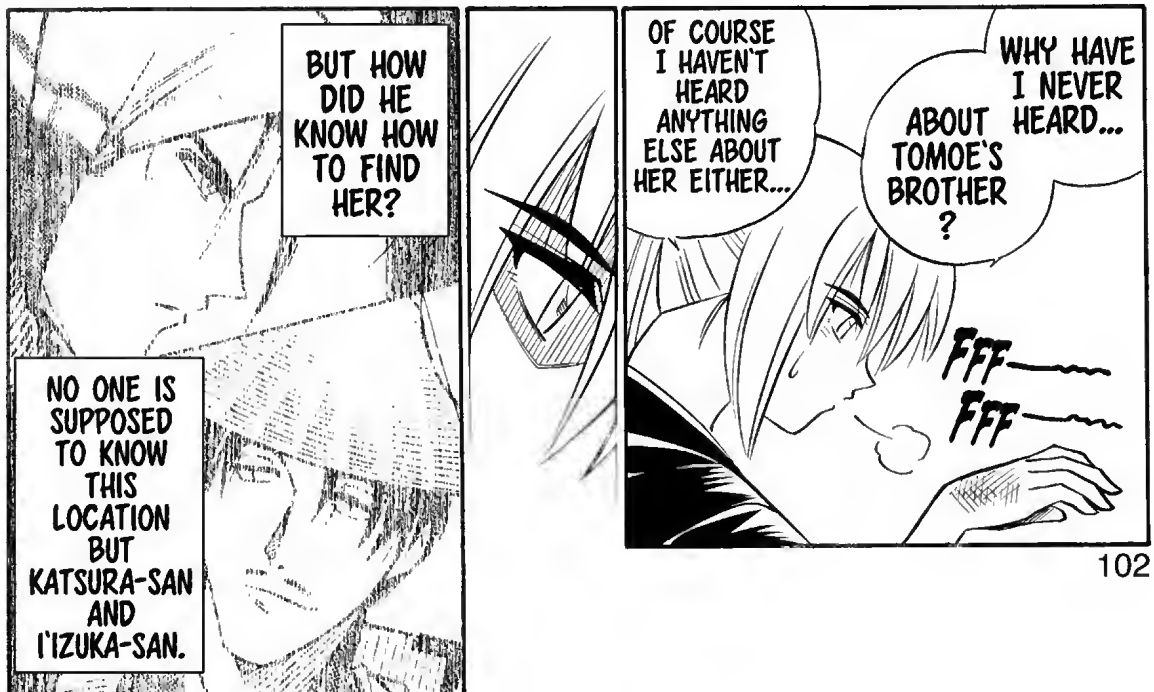
Act 173
Remembrance 8: Arrival of Enishi

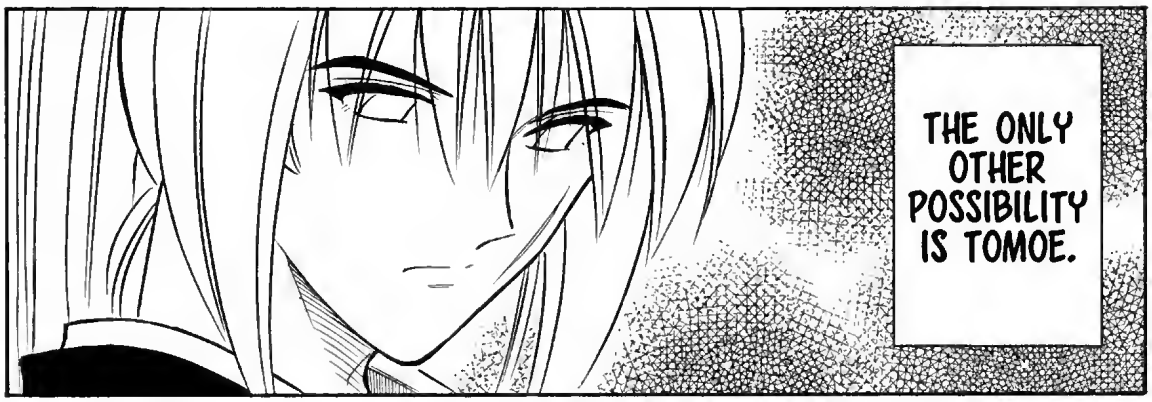
伸宏和月

THIS IS MY BROTHER...
...ENISHI.
I SEE...
YOUR BROTHER.
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, HE HAS YOUR—
GOMP
OW!!

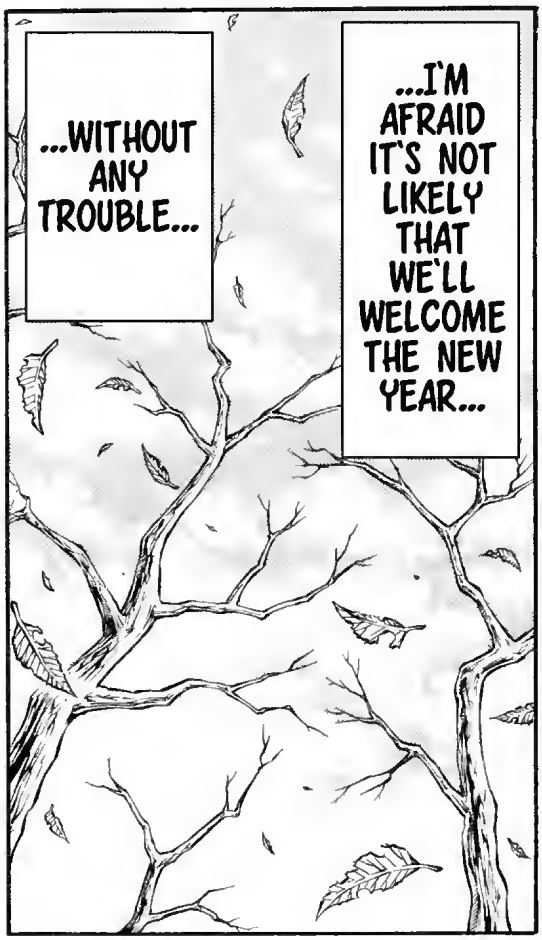

I'M SURE YOU TWO HAVE A LOT TO TALK ABOUT...SO I'LL STEP OUT FOR A WHILE.


SIXTEEN!!
FIFTEEN...
HYAH
HWAH
TNNG
TNNG


BUT HOW DID HE KNOW HOW TO FIND HER?
NO ONE IS SUPPOSED TO KNOW THIS LOCATION BUT KATSURA-SAN AND I'IZUKA-SAN.
OF COURSE I HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING ELSE ABOUT HER EITHER...
WHY HAVE I NEVER HEARD... ABOUT TOMOE'S BROTHER ?
FFF——
FFF——


THE ONLY OTHER POSSIBILITY IS TOMOE.

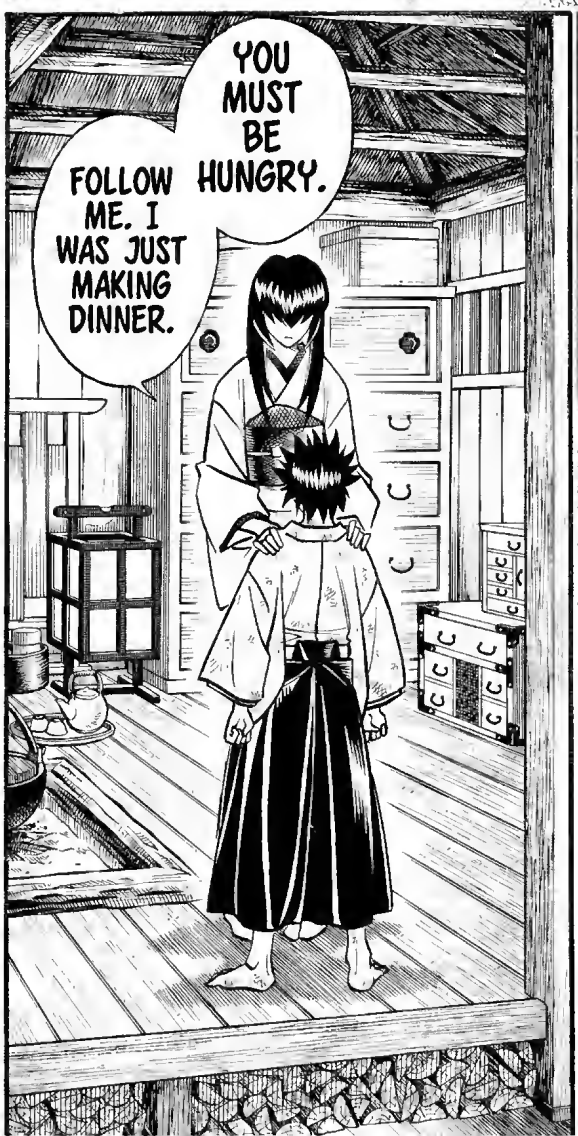
...THAT SEEMS UNLIKELY.
BUT JUDGING BY HER SURPRISE ...

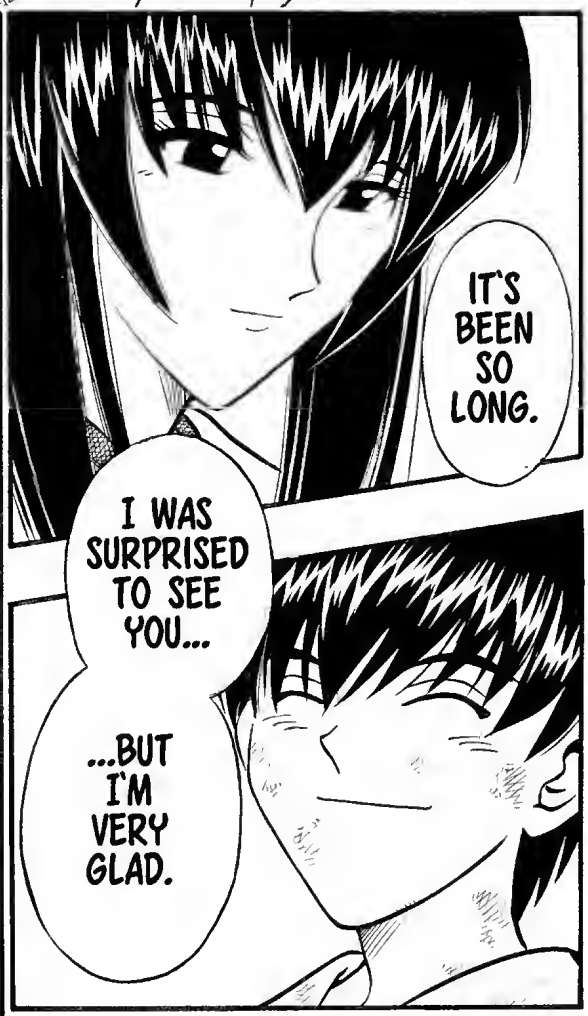

...WITHOUT ANY TROUBLE...
...I'M AFRAID IT'S NOT LIKELY THAT WE'LL WELCOME THE NEW YEAR...

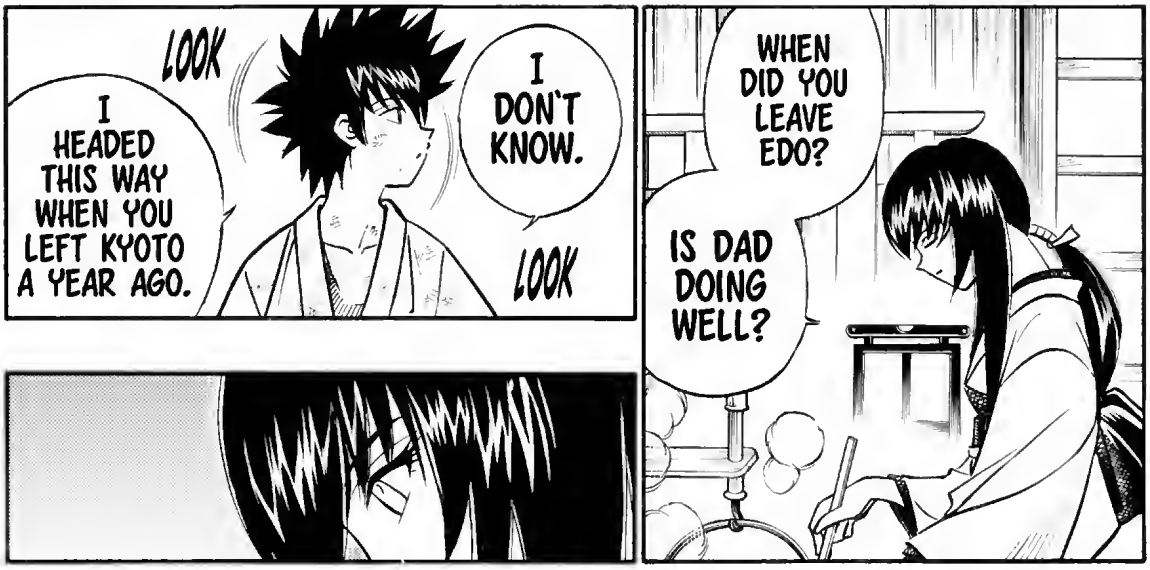
AREN'T YOU GONNA PLAY ANYMORE ?
WHAT'S THE MATTER ?

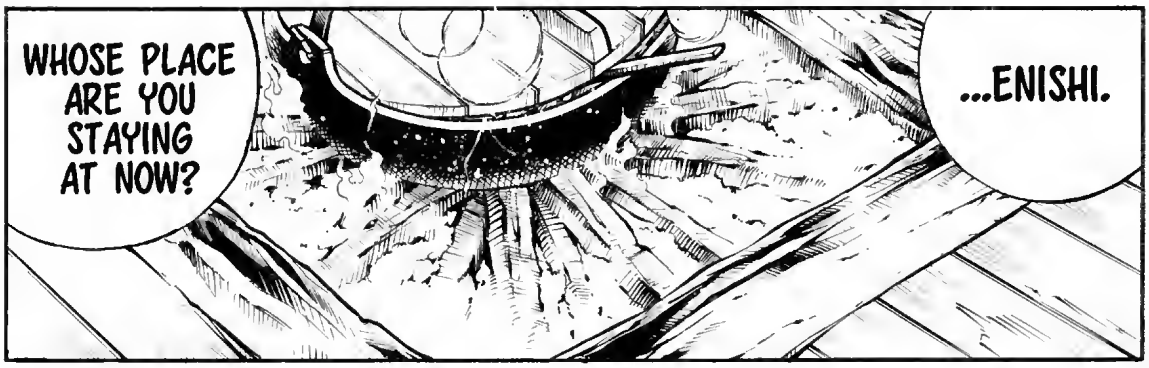
WELL, ALL I HAVE ARE SUSPICIONS FOR NOW.
STILL...

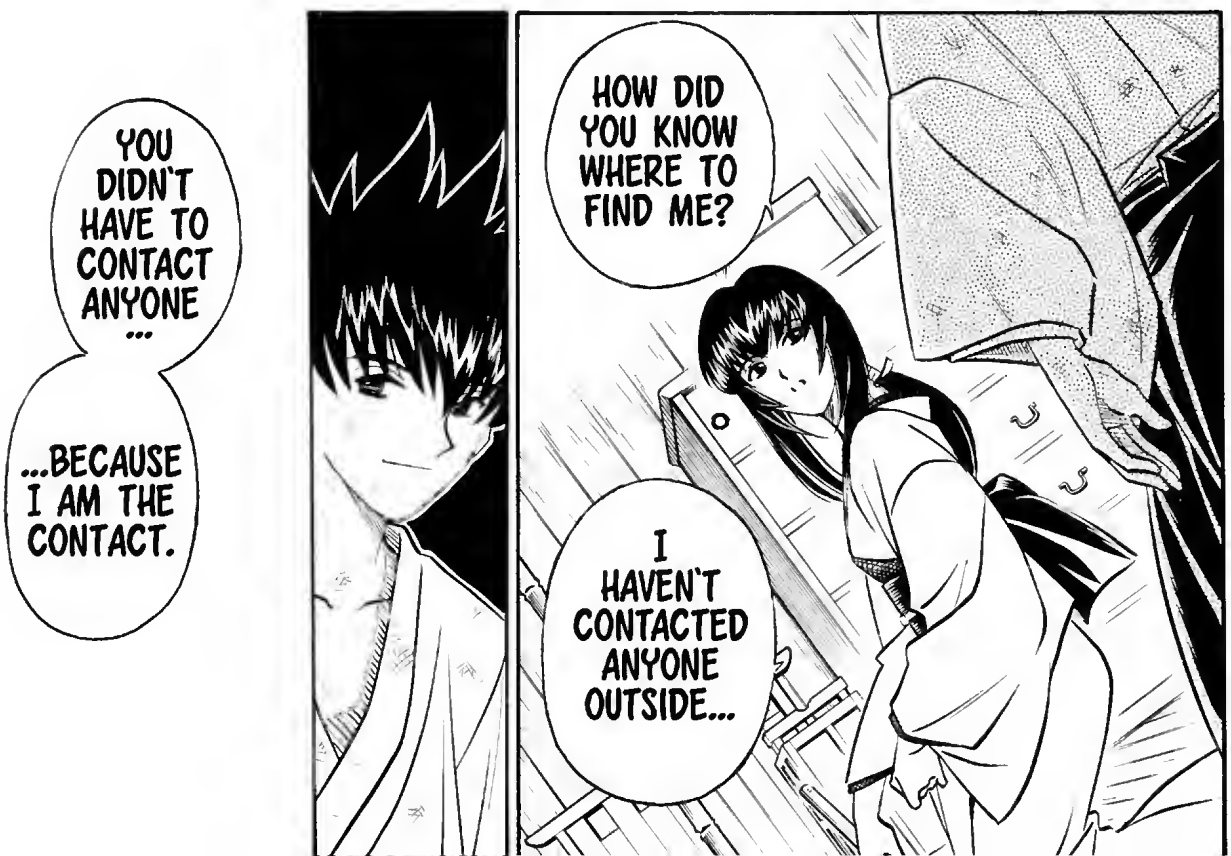
OH, SORRY. HERE I COME!


YOU MUST BE HUNGRY.
FOLLOW ME. I WAS JUST MAKING DINNER.


IT'S BEEN SO LONG.
I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE YOU...
...BUT I'M VERY GLAD.


LOOK
I HEADED THIS WAY WHEN YOU LEFT KYOTO A YEAR AGO.
I DON'T KNOW.
LOOK
WHEN DID YOU LEAVE EDO?
IS DAD DOING WELL?


WHOSE PLACE ARE YOU STAYING AT NOW?
...ENISHI.

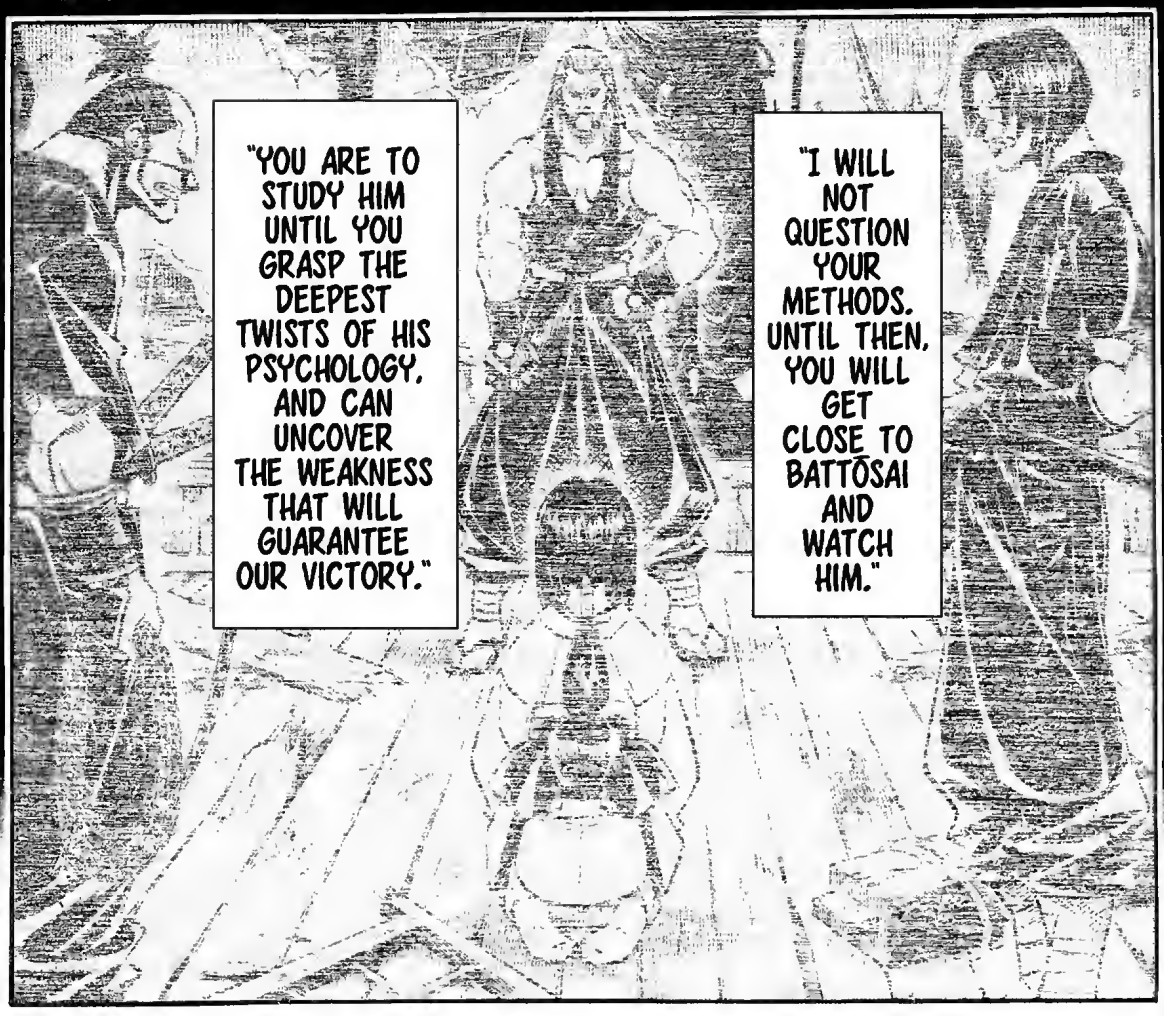

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO CONTACT ANYONE ...
...BECAUSE I AM THE CONTACT.
HOW DID YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND ME?
I HAVEN'T CONTACTED ANYONE OUTSIDE...

...TO CAST TENCHŪ ON BATTŌSAI.
REJOICE, SISTER.
IT'S FINALLY TIME...
GLINT

YOU DIDN'T HEAR ABOUT IT?
THE MAN SAID HE'D ALREADY TOLD YOU!

"WHEN THE TIME COMES, I WILL SEND SOMEONE YOU TRUST TO SERVE AS OUR CONTACT."

ENISHI...
YOU CAN'T BE...
TUP


"YOU ARE TO STUDY HIM UNTIL YOU GRASP THE DEEPEST TWISTS OF HIS PSYCHOLOGY, AND CAN UNCOVER THE WEAKNESS THAT WILL GUARANTEE OUR VICTORY."
"I WILL NOT QUESTION YOUR METHODS. UNTIL THEN, YOU WILL GET CLOSE TO BATTŌSAI AND WATCH HIM."

LET'S GO, TOMOE! IT'S ALMOST OVER!!
FWAH!

...MUSTN'T STAIN YOUR HANDS IN MATTERS LIKE THIS.
YOU ARE THE ELDEST SON OF THE YUKISHIRO FAMILY.
YOU...
HUH?
GO HOME... TO EDO.

I WANT TO HELP YOU!
THAT'S ALL!!
ARH!
I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE FAMILY!

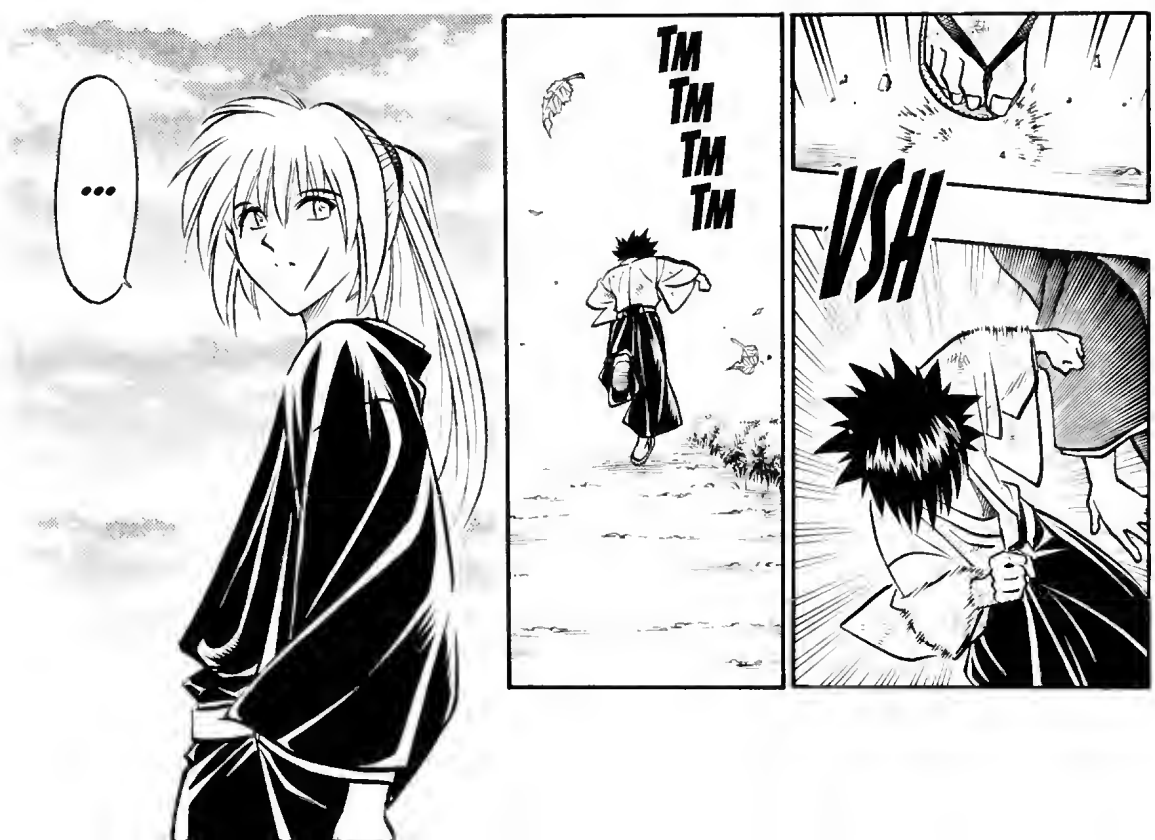
GO HOME, ENISHI.

HE'S THE MAN WHO STOLE YOUR HAPPINESS !!!
WHAT HAPPENED ?
WHAT'S THE MATTER ?
...
GG
WHY WON'T YOU COME...
...WITH ME?
WHY ARE YOU PROTECTING HIM?!
HE'S YOUR ENEMY!!

BYE—!
SEE YA TOMORROW!
KAAA
BYE.
TAKE CARE ON YOUR WAY HOME.
KAAA
HMM?
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR DINNER—
TM

SS
SS

YOU HAD NEVER EXISTED...!
IF ONLY...


...
TM TM TM TM
VSH

...
...
SH
SH
KARAA
TOMOE?
WHY DID YOUR—?
HH
GASP!
BAI

I KNOW I'VE NEVER TOLD YOU.
AND BEING SO RESPECT-FUL...
...EDO...?
...WHAT'S WRONG?
N-NOTHING.
I SENT ENISHI...
...BACK TO EDO.
...YOU'VE NEVER ASKED ME.
...BUT...
...MAYBE IT'S TIME.
LET'S...
...TALK A LITTLE.

Rurouni Kenshin

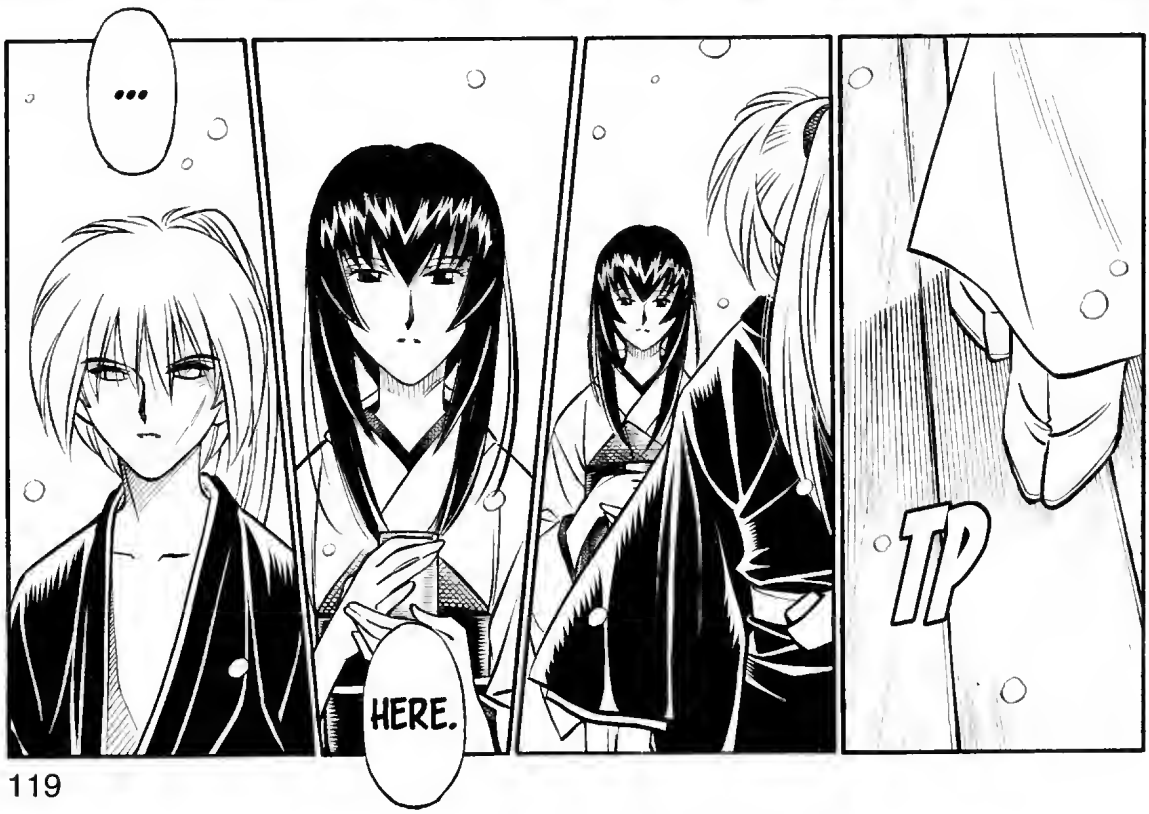
Act 174—Remembrance 9: White Snow

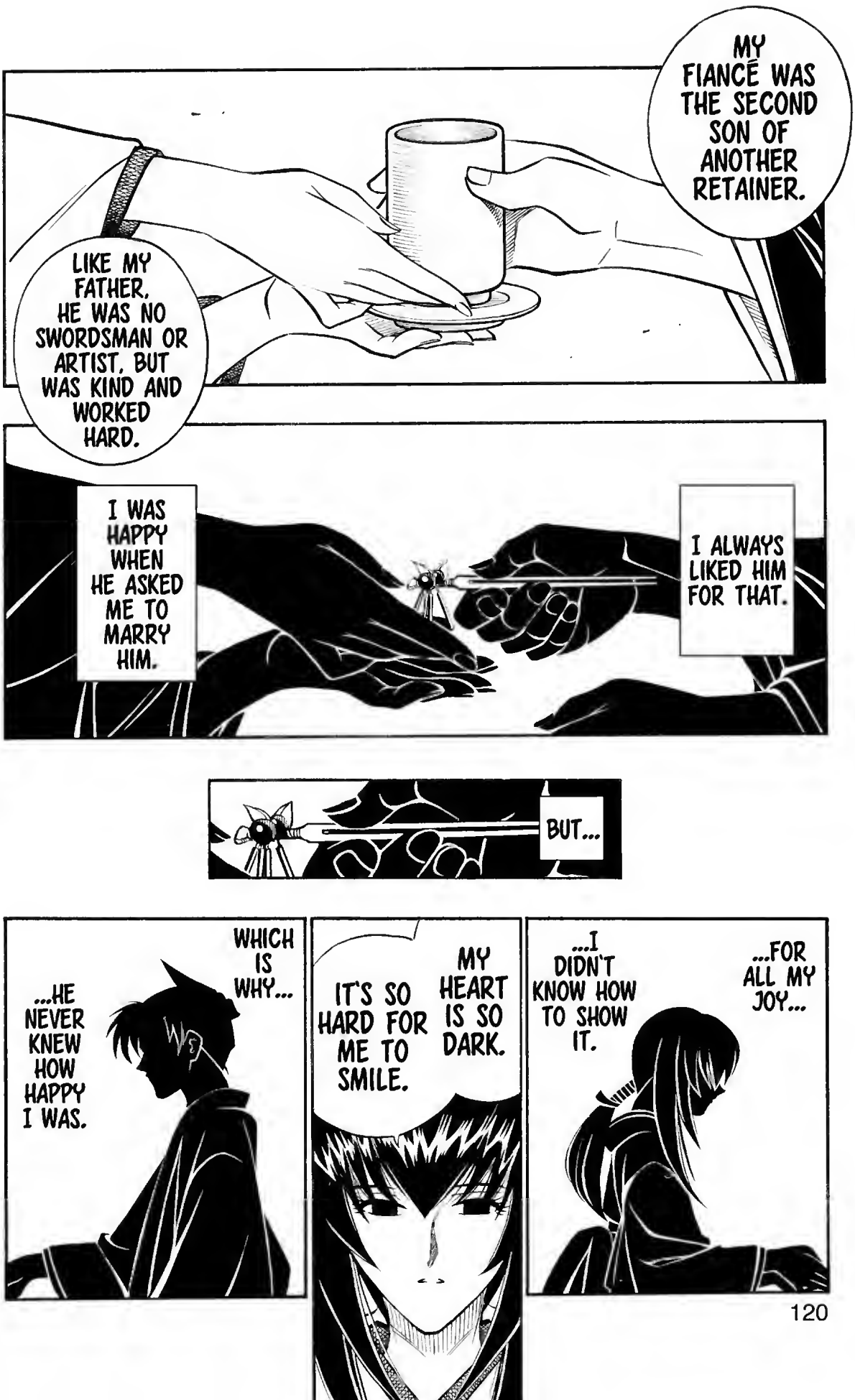
Remembrance 9: White Snow
Act 174

YES. MY FAMILY IS FROM EDO.
WE LIVED PEACEFULLY. FATHER WAS A RETAINER TO THE SHŌGUN.
WE DIDN'T HAVE MONEY TO WASTE, BUT WE ALWAYS HAD ENOUGH FOOD.

ENISHI NEVER KNEW HER...
...AND I RAISED HIM IN HER PLACE.
MOTHER WAS A GOOD WOMAN, BUT SHE DIED SOON AFTER GIVING BIRTH TO ENISHI.
FATHER WAS NO GOOD AT THE SWORD OR THE BRUSH, BUT HE WAS KIND.
BLUP
BLUP
BLUP
...AND A MOTHER.
TO HIM, I AM A SISTER...
HE'S VERY EMOTIONAL, AND HE CAN BE A PROBLEM.
HE'S MY DARLING BROTHER, BUT...
...HE HAD A VERY HARD TIME.
WHEN I SAID I WAS GETTING MARRIED...

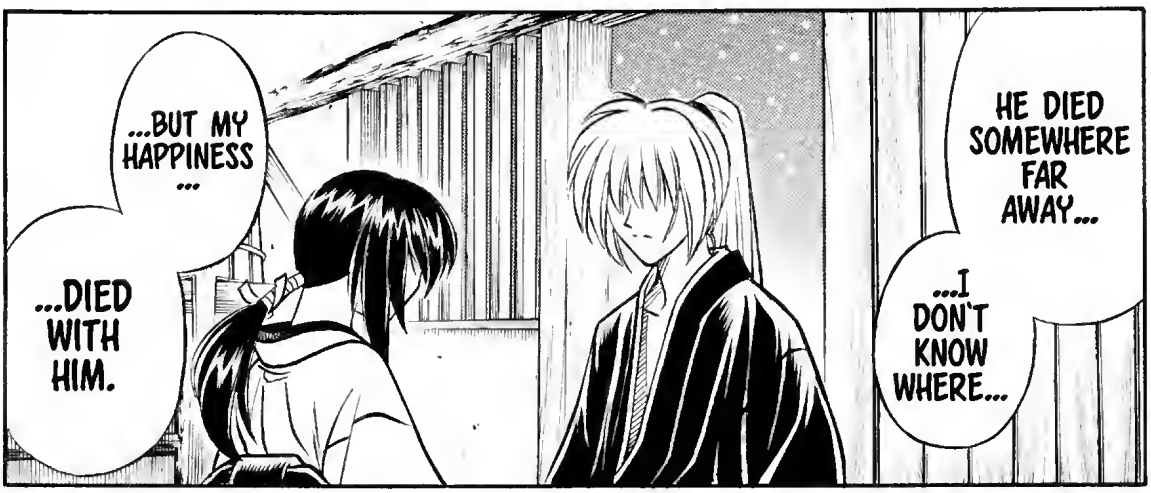
...


...
HERE.
TP


MY FIANCÉ WAS THE SECOND SON OF ANOTHER RETAINER.
LIKE MY FATHER. HE WAS NO SWORDSMAN OR ARTIST. BUT WAS KIND AND WORKED HARD.
I WAS HAPPY WHEN HE ASKED ME TO MARRY HIM.
I ALWAYS LIKED HIM FOR THAT.
BUT...
...HE NEVER KNEW HOW HAPPY I WAS.
WHICH IS WHY...
IT'S SO HARD FOR ME TO SMILE.
MY HEART IS SO DARK.
...I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO SHOW IT.
...FOR ALL MY JOY...

"A MERE SECOND SON OF A SAMURAI CAN'T MAKE YOU HAPPY! I MUST BE GOOD ENOUGH TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A SAMURAI MYSELF!"
AND...
...HE NEVER CAME BACK.
SO HE SAID. THEN HE POSTPONED THE WEDDING AND DECIDED TO JOIN THE MIMAWARIGUMI IN THE STRUGGLE FOR KYOTO.

I COULDN'T REST AFTER I HEARD THE NEWS.
SO I CAME TO KYOTO...
AND DEVOTED MYSELF TO PLOTTING YOUR DEATH.
GG

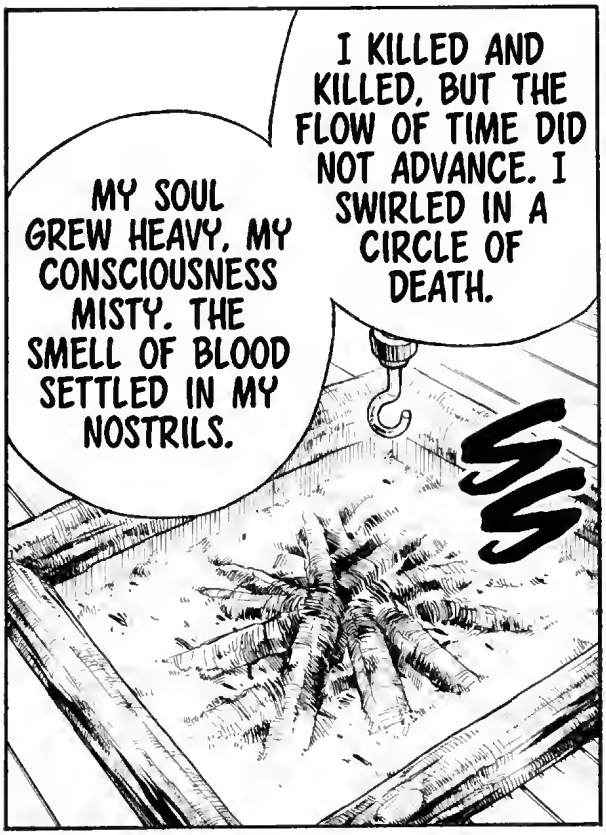

HE DIED SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY...
...I DON'T KNOW WHERE...
...BUT MY HAPPINESS ...
...DIED WITH HIM.

AND IN THE END, I THINK...
...IT WAS MY FAULT.

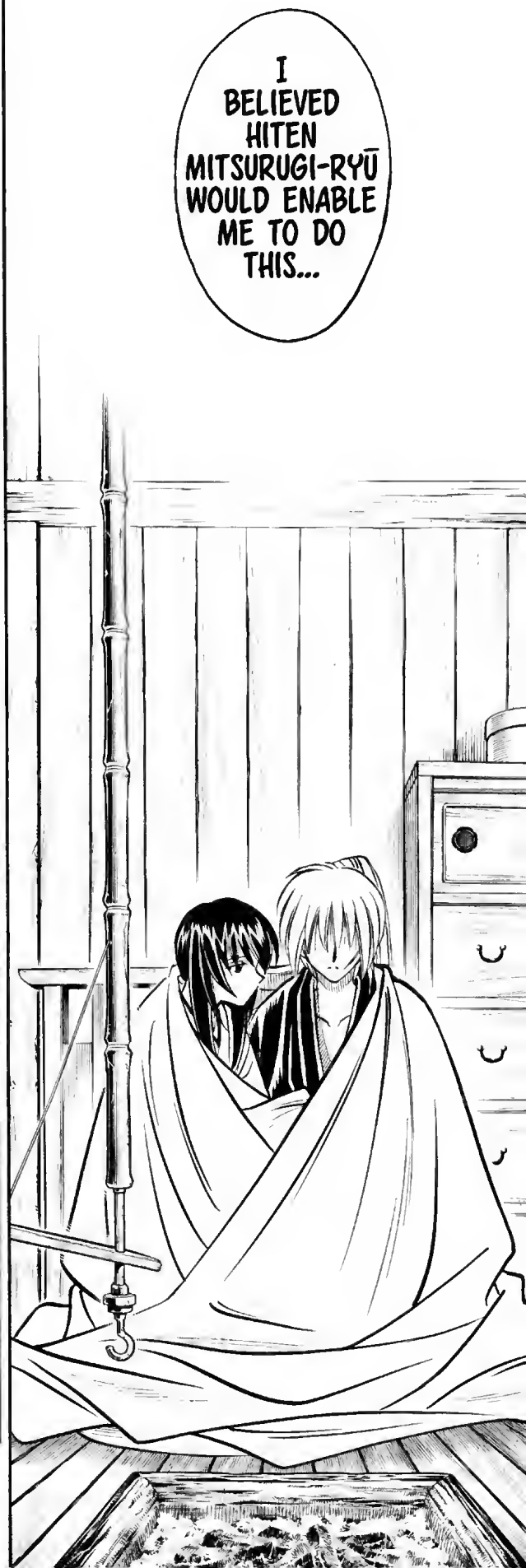
IF ONLY I'D CRIED AND BEGGED HIM TO STAY...
WELL, WHEN I THOUGHT THAT...
I HAD TO FIND SOMEONE TO HATE...TO KEEP MY SANITY...
TOMOE...
I...
...UNDER-STAND...

A LITTLE OVER A YEAR AGO...
I LEFT MY MASTER TO PROTECT THE HAPPINESS OF THIS NATION'S PEOPLE WITH MY SWORD.
IN ORDER TO DO SO, I THOUGHT I HAD TO END THIS CHAOS AND BUILD A NEW ERA. SO I ALLIED MYSELF WITH THE CHŌSHŪ ISHIN SHISHI AND BECAME HITOKIRI BATTŌSAI.

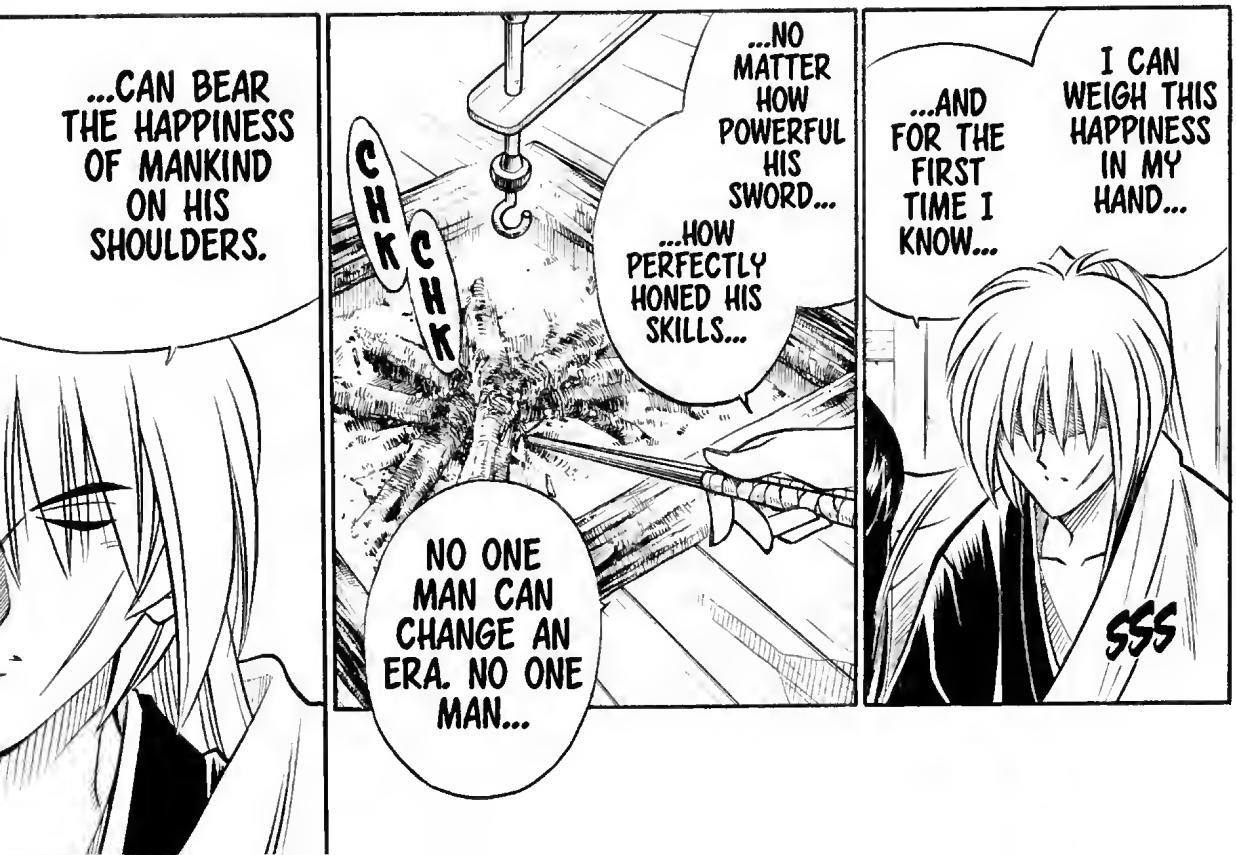
BUT REALITY IS NOT SO EASY.


I KILLED AND KILLED, BUT THE FLOW OF TIME DID NOT ADVANCE. I SWIRLED IN A CIRCLE OF DEATH.
MY SOUL GREW HEAVY. MY CONSCIOUSNESS MISTY. THE SMELL OF BLOOD SETTLED IN MY NOSTRILS.
SS

AND THEN I MET YOU...

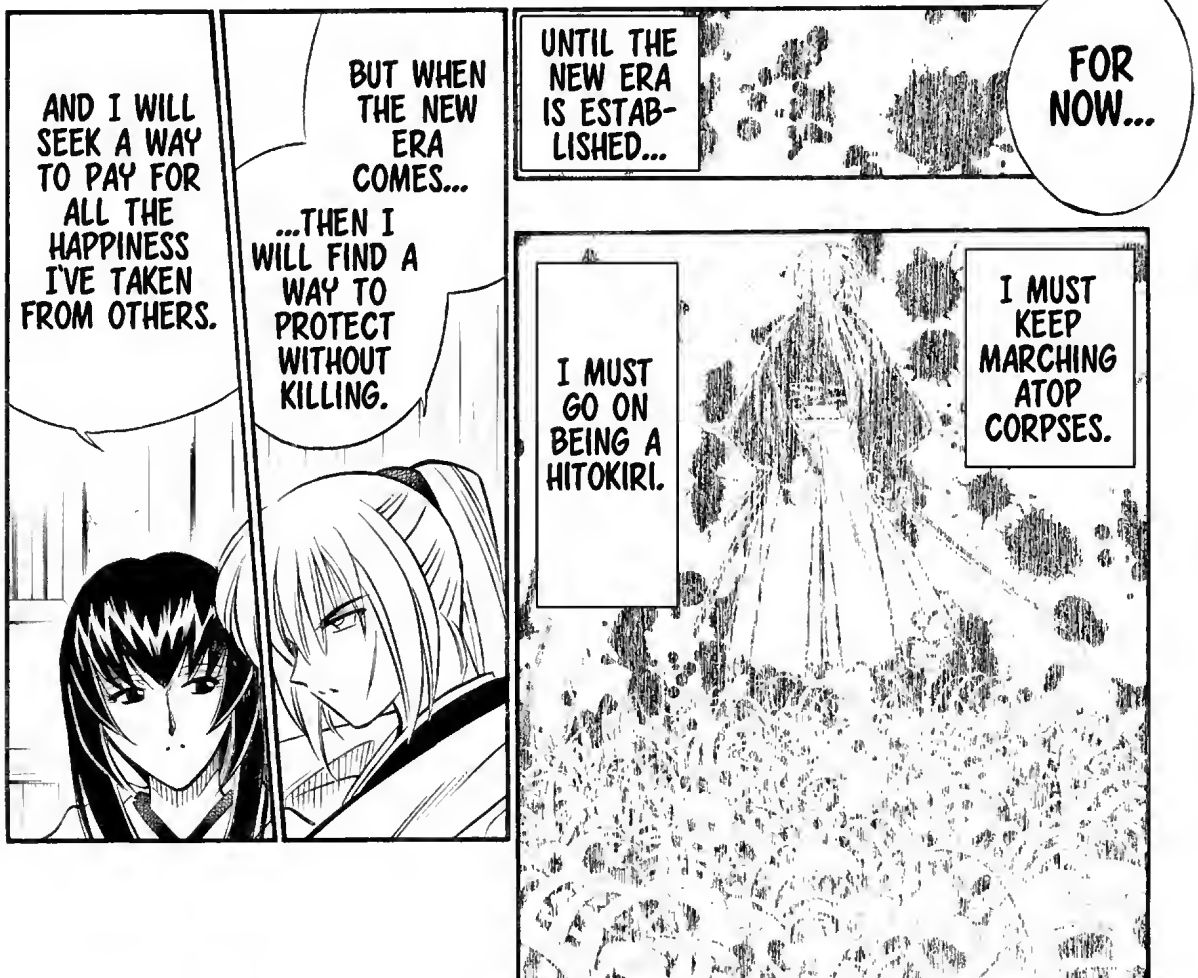

I BELIEVED HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ WOULD ENABLE ME TO DO THIS...

I NO LONGER SMELL BLOOD, BUT THE FAINT SCENT OF *HAKUBAIKŌ*.



ALL A MAN CAN DO IS TO PROTECT THE HAPPINESS OF THE PEOPLE HE CAN SEE.

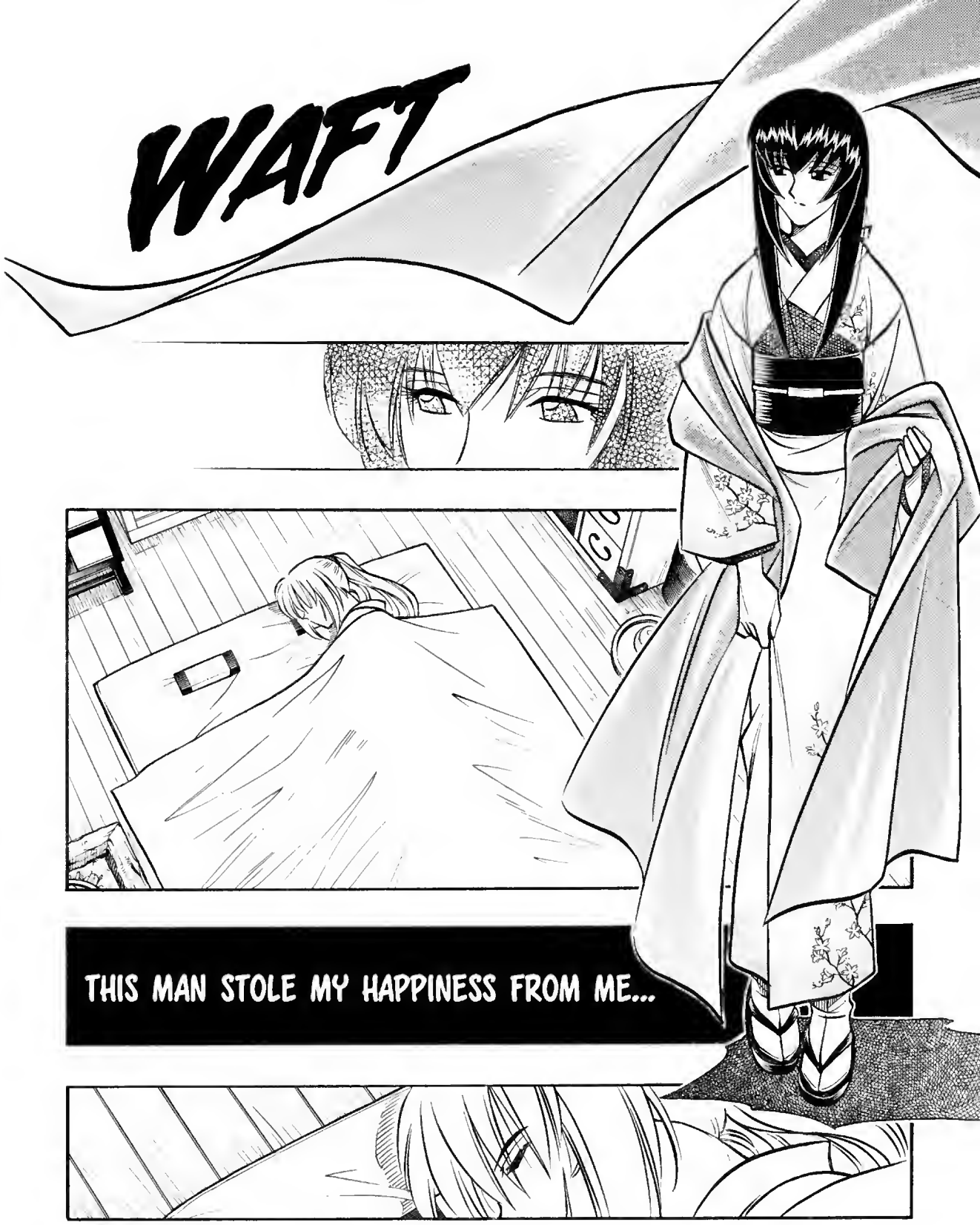
POP
KYK

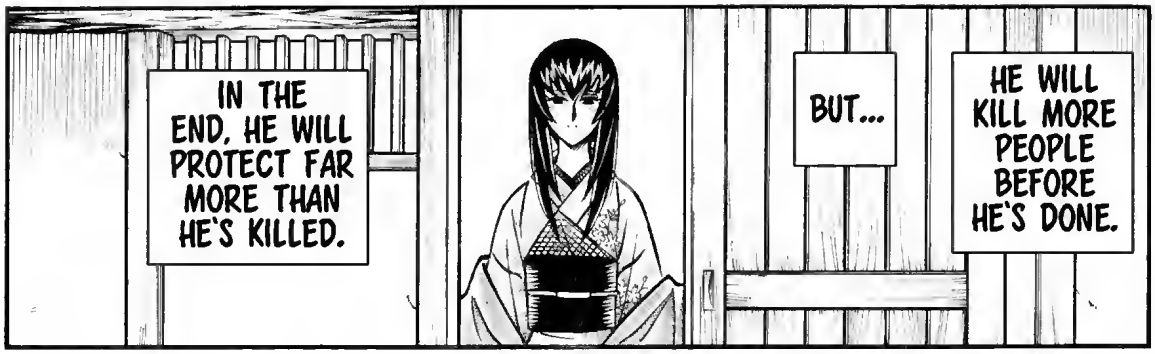

FOR NOW...
UNTIL THE NEW ERA IS ESTABLISHED...
I MUST KEEP MARCHING ATOP CORPSES.
I MUST GO ON BEING A HITOKIRI.
BUT WHEN THE NEW ERA COMES...
...THEN I WILL FIND A WAY TO PROTECT WITHOUT KILLING.
AND I WILL SEEK A WAY TO PAY FOR ALL THE HAPPINESS I'VE TAKEN FROM OTHERS.

...I WILL PROTECT THIS TIME AROUND.
THE HAPPINESS YOU LOST ONCE TO THIS CHAOS...
...TOMOE ...
YES?

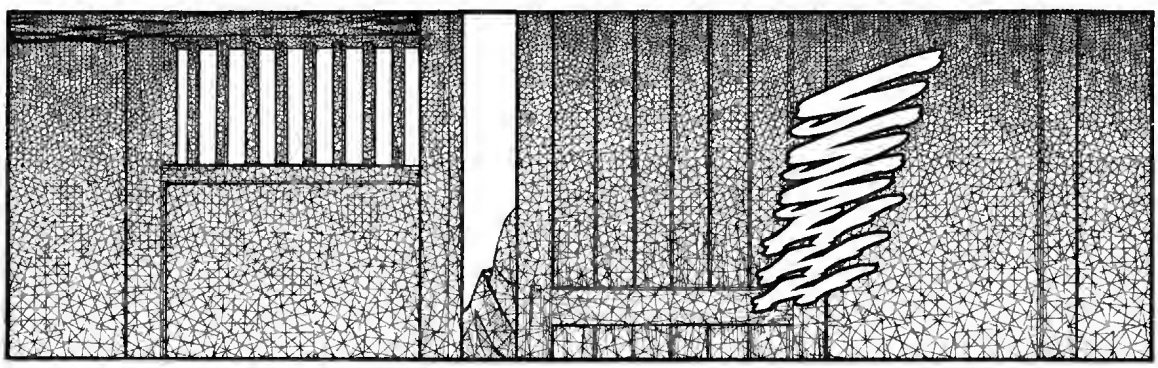
YES...

CHI CHI CHI
THU
SHF
TP
PAM


WAFT
THIS MAN STOLE MY HAPPINESS FROM ME...
...AND GAVE ME ANOTHER IN ITS PLACE.



I CAN'T LET HIM DIE HERE.



SHM

Rurouni Kenshin

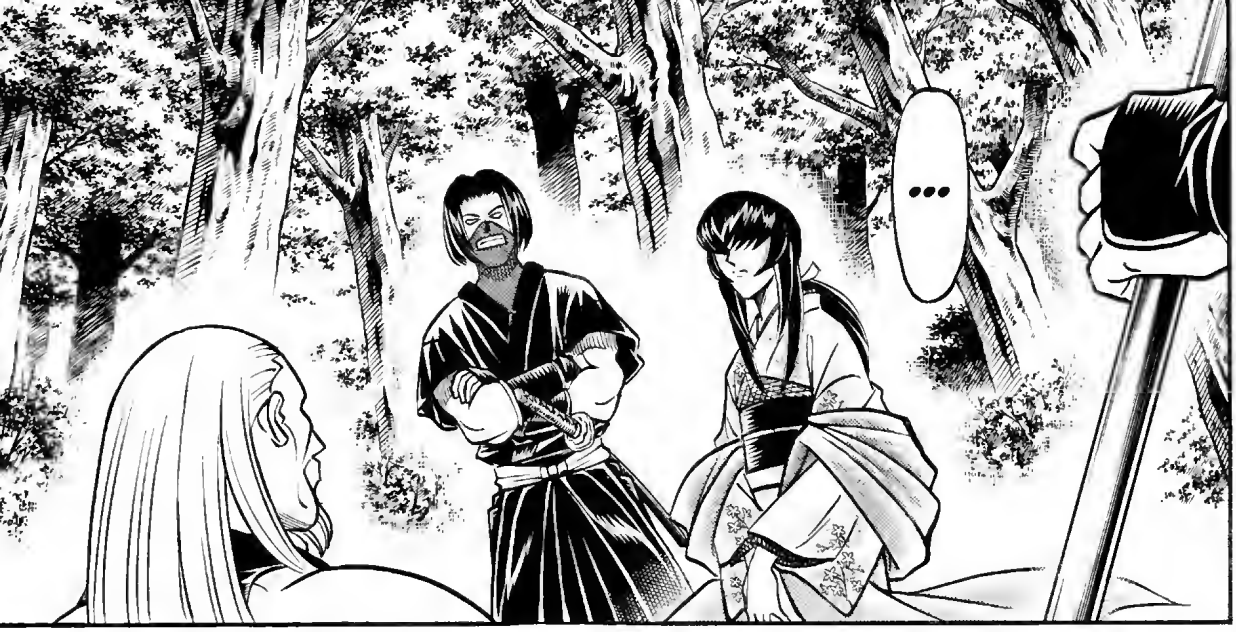
Act 175

Remembrance 10: The Binding Forest

—WHERE IS THAT KID?
VIP
VIP
I SENT ENISHI OVER TO BATTŌSAI'S PLACE.
HEH
THERE ARE NO GAPS...
...IN OUR PLAN.
SHOWING UP HALF A DAY LATE...
LUCKY FOR YOU, KID. WE'D HAVE KILLED YOU IF SHE—
TP
NOW, WOMAN...
WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO REPORT?

Act 175
Remembrance 10:
The Binding Forest
伸宏
利月

...WELL? SPEAK.
TPPI!!
BEFORE THAT, ANSWER ONE QUESTION.
WHY... ...DID YOU INVOLVE ENISHI?
WE DIDN'T INVOLVE HIM.
SOMEONE ABOVE US COULDN'T STAND TO WATCH THE POOR LAD PINING AWAY FOR HIS SISTER.
"WHERE IS MY SISTER?" "WHO KILLED MY FIANCÉ?" THEY BOTH LEAD TO THE SAME PATH.
LET'S HEAR YOUR REPORT.


...

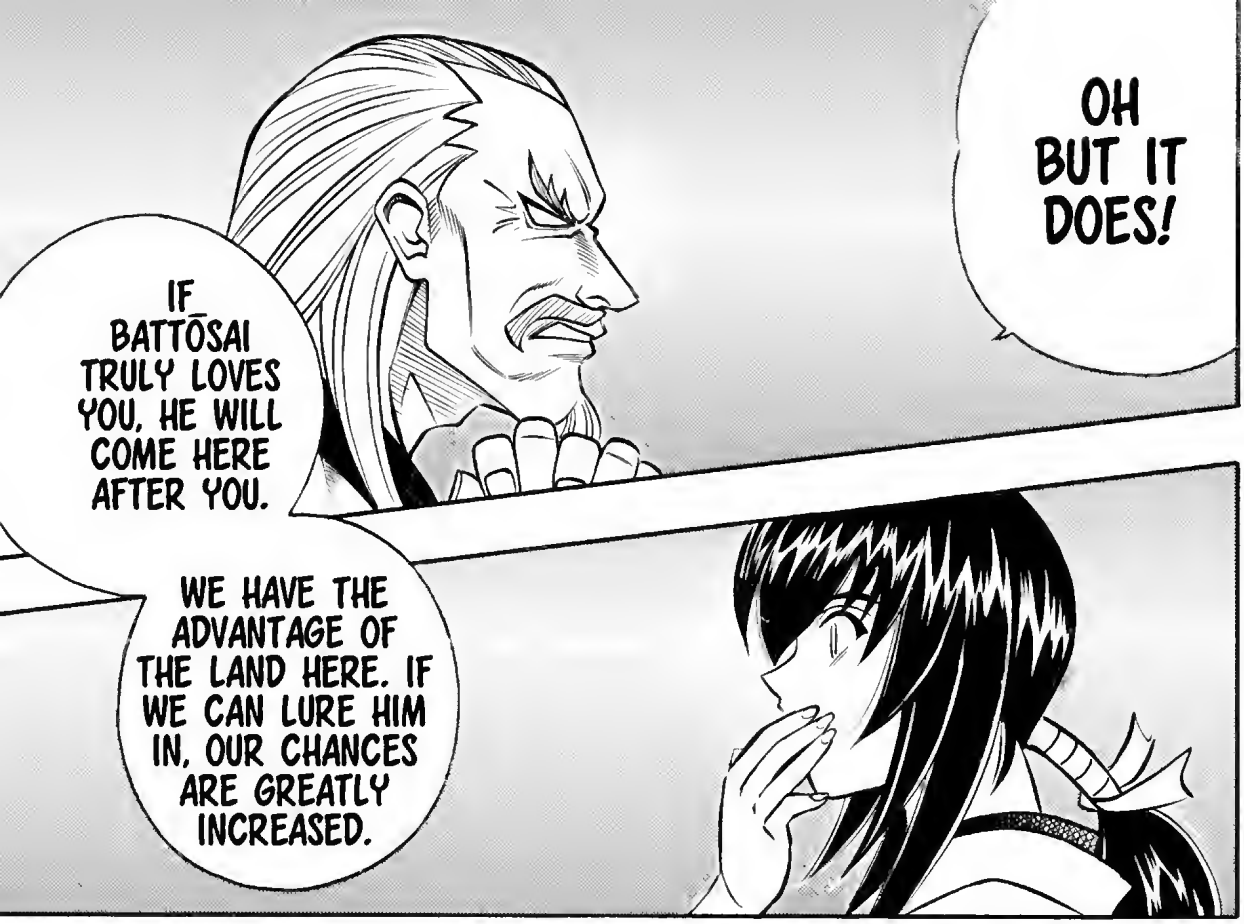
YOU DIDN'T LIVE WITH HIM FOR A YEAR...
...JUST TO TELL US, "I COULDN'T FIND OUT."

TELL US...
BATTŌSAI'S WEAKNESS.

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

...HIMURA...
...HAS ONE WEAKNESS...

—HE IS TOO KIND TO BE A HITOKIRI—


OH BUT IT DOES!
IF BATTŌSAI TRULY LOVES YOU, HE WILL COME HERE AFTER YOU.
WE HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF THE LAND HERE. IF WE CAN LURE HIM IN, OUR CHANCES ARE GREATLY INCREASED.

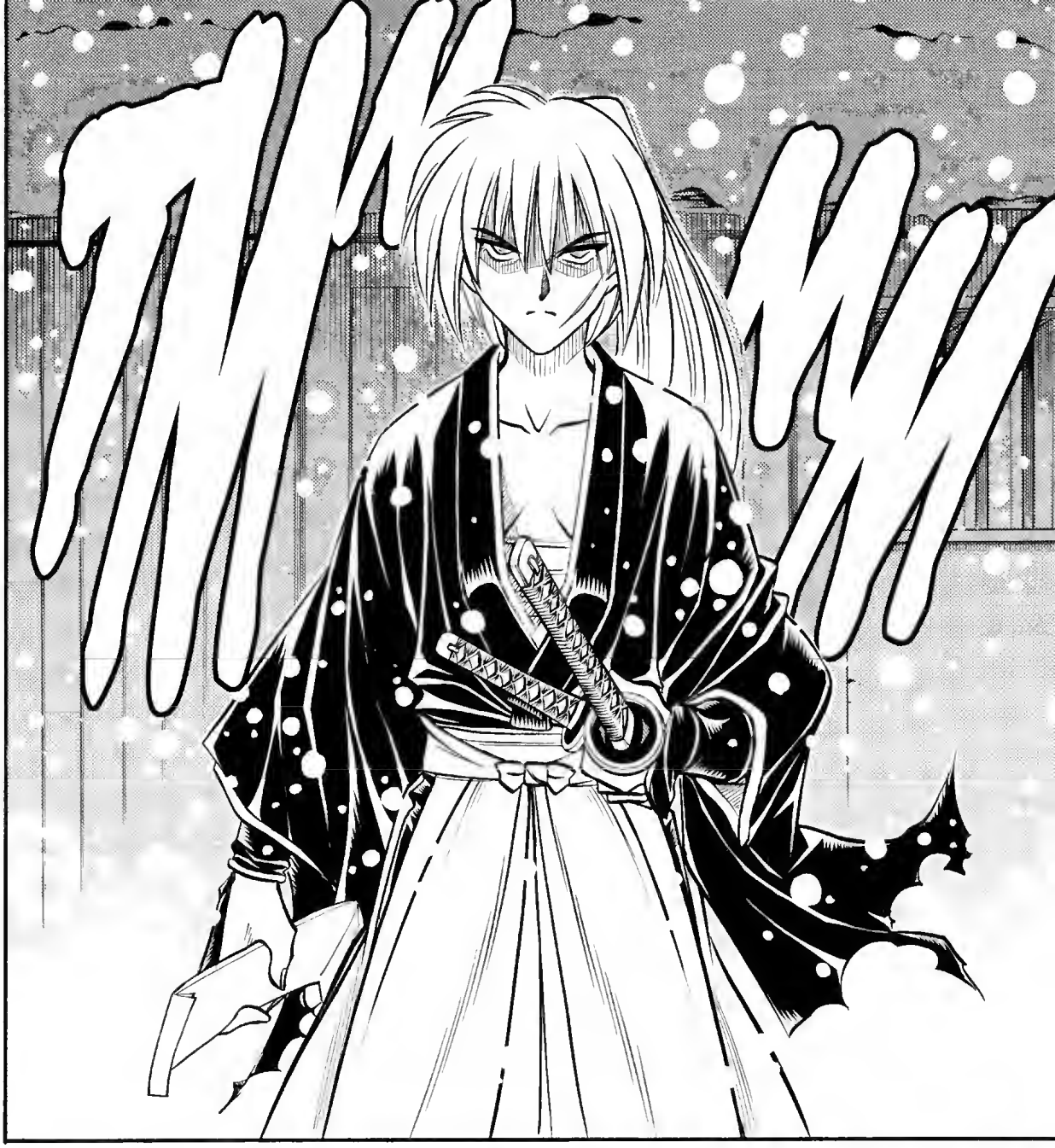
RATHER THAN HOPING FOR A WEAKNESS THAT MAY NOT EXIST...
TP
TP
...IT'S SO MUCH MORE RELIABLE TO CREATE ONE.

TO MAKE ME HIS WEAKNESS !!
...THAT ...
...WAS YOUR PLAN ALL ALONG. NOT TO USE ME TO LEARN HIS WEAKNESS.

I HAVE ALREADY SENT A RUNNER TO DELIVER A LETTER.
SH-
HE MUST BE BLAZING WITH RAGE BY NOW.

GG
I ENDED UP... PULLING HIM INTO A CORNER...
WE ARE NOT AS STUPID...
...AS YOU MAY THINK.
GOD...
!
I SHALL DECREASE THE NUMBER OF THE ENEMY BY—
VSH
THEN AT LEAST—
HYAH !!!
WAAK

WORDS TWISTED BY THE PASSIONS OF WEAKNESS!
"SLEEP IS HIS WEAKNESS"! WHAT A LIE!
YOU DON'T THINK TATSUMI CAN SEE THROUGH YOU?!
TSK
DA
SH
NAKAJŌ, SUMITA, AND YATSUME! NOW IS THE TIME TO SHOW THE STRENGTH OF THE YAMINOBU!!
WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THE GIRL LATER! WE MUST FACE BATTŌSAI!!
COME NOW, BATTŌSAI. TO OUR BATTLEFIELD... THE "BINDING FOREST"!!

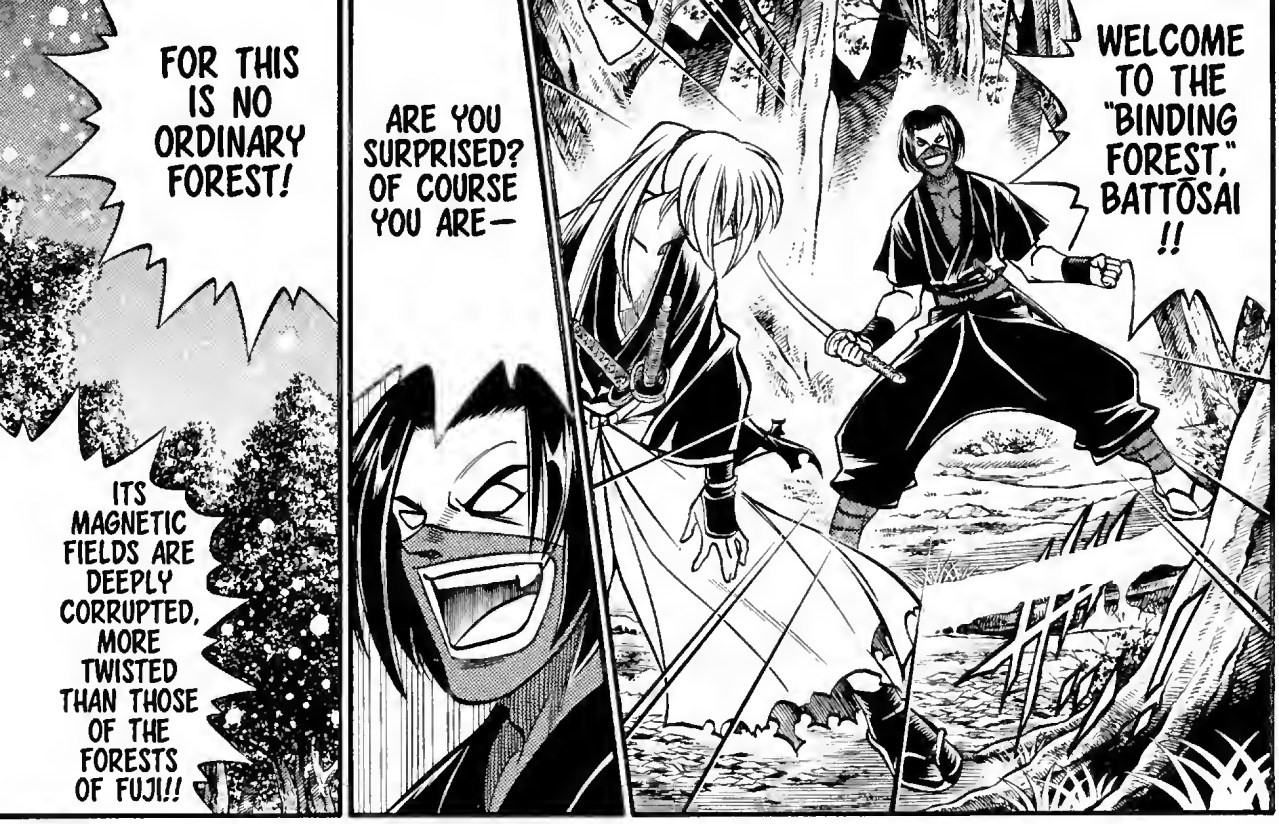


CRUNCH
TP
TP
"YOUR TASK, ENISHI, IS TO THROW THIS LETTER INTO BATTŌSAI'S HOME. IF ALL GOES WELL, YOU AND YOUR SISTER CAN GO FREE."
...HE'S MOVING.
WE'RE GOING HOME TO EDO TOGETHER!
NOW, SIS, WE'RE GOING HOME!

IS THIS IT...?
TP

READ THIS WAY
...
WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
SOME-THING'S WRONG.
IT FEELS...
...LIKE NO FOREST I'VE KNOWN...
AS IF SOME-HOW...
...ONE OF MY SENSES HAS BEEN SMOTHERED...

KYOHHHHH
!!
ZZZZZZZZ


FOR THIS IS NO ORDINARY FOREST!
ITS MAGNETIC FIELDS ARE DEEPLY CORRUPTED, MORE TWISTED THAN THOSE OF THE FORESTS OF FUJI!!
ARE YOU SURPRISED? OF COURSE YOU ARE—
WELCOME TO THE "BINDING FOREST," BATTŌSAI !!

THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN USE THEIR "EXTRA PERCEPTION" PROPERLY HERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE TRAINED HERE... THE YAMINOBU!!
IN THIS FOREST DEVOID OF ALL ANIMALS, THAT "SIXTH SENSE" OF ALL GREAT SWORDSMEN IS OF NO USE!!

...WHAT?
SO...
WHICH MEANS YOU CAN ONLY FIGHT AT HALF STRENGTH!!

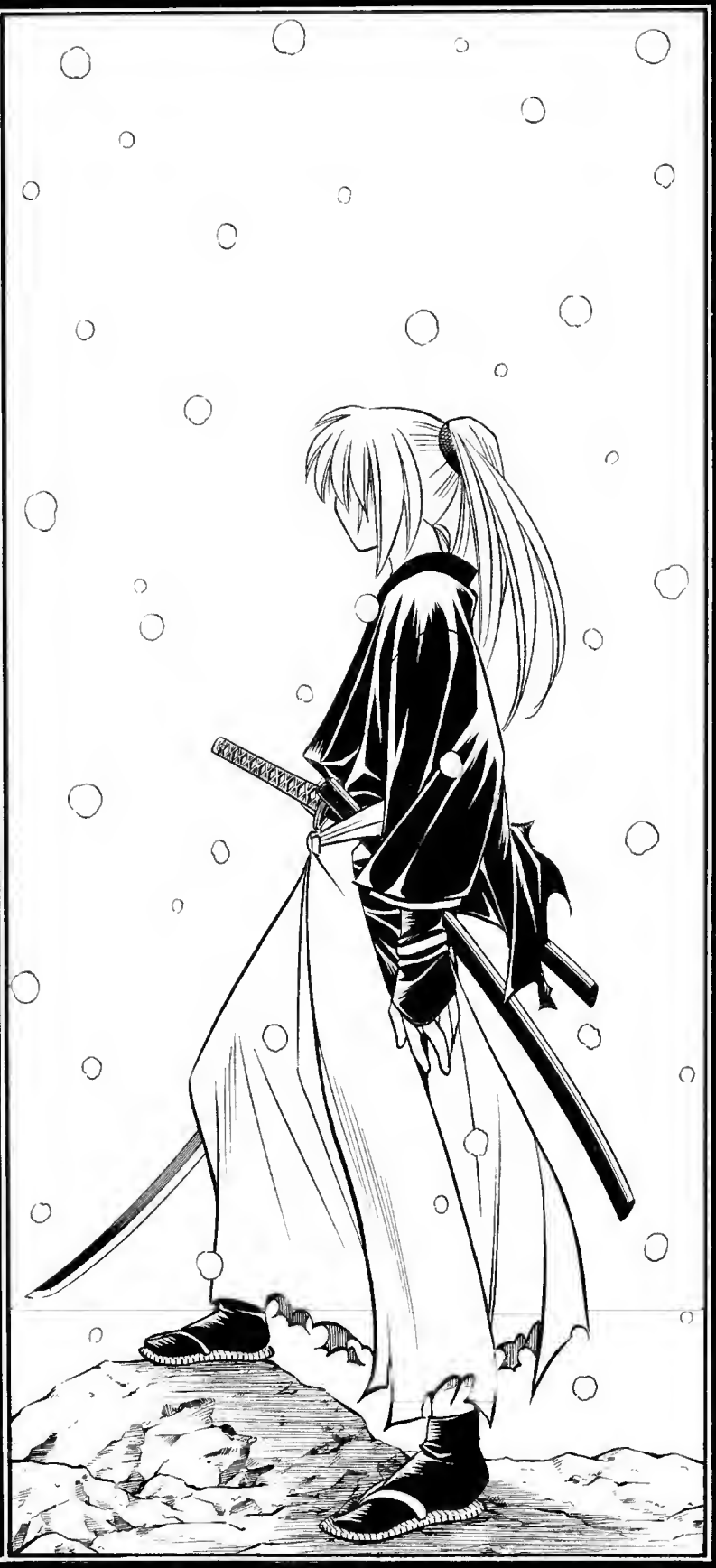
ヒュッ

PSSH
!
TP
WUMP
GUH!!
I WILL PROTECT TOMOE'S HAPPINESS.
I PROMISED HER THAT LAST NIGHT.

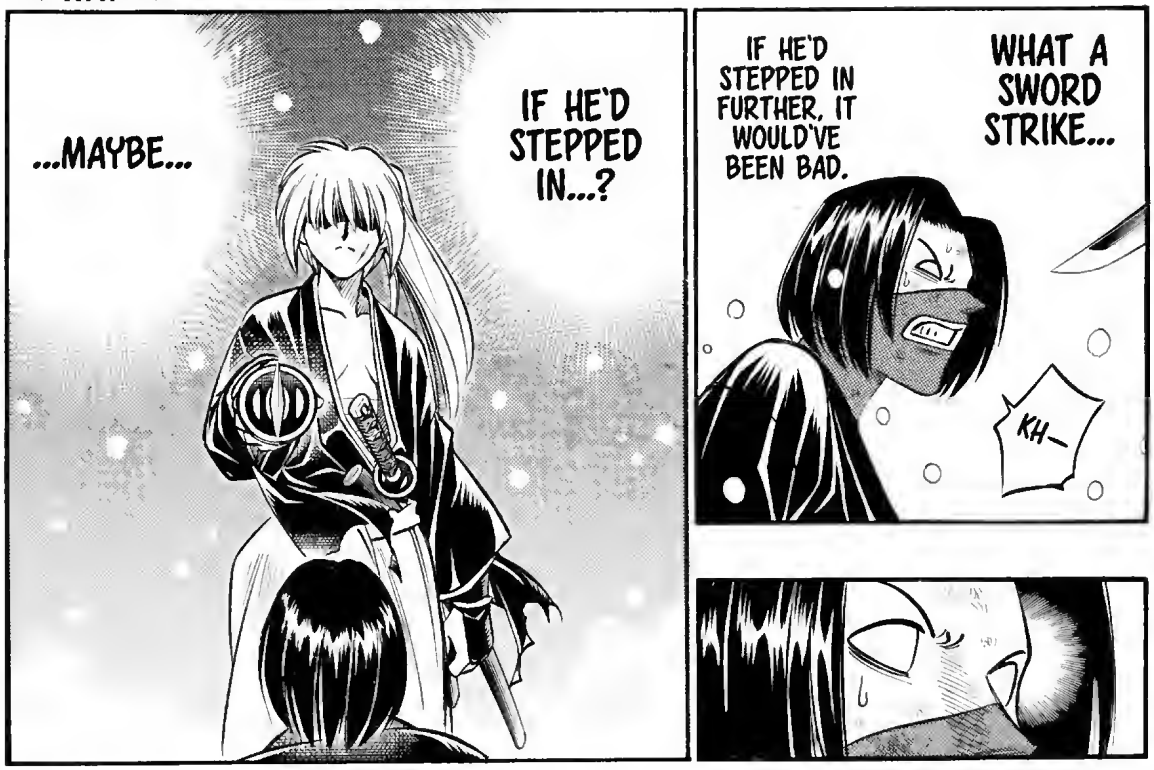
WHERE THIS IS OR WHO YOU ARE...
...MAKE NO DIFFERENCE TO ME.
ANYONE WHO STANDS IN MY WAY—
I WILL KILL!!!

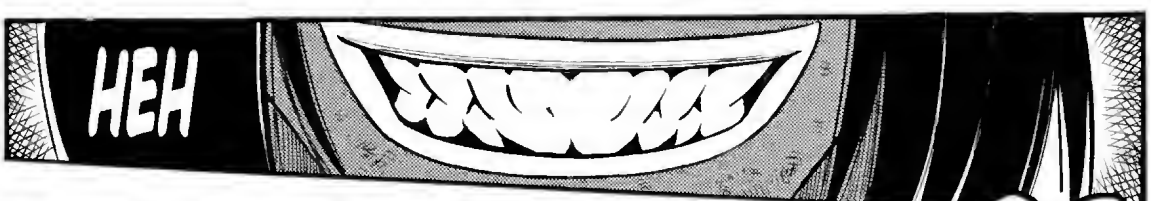
Rurouni Kenshin

Act 176
Remembrance 11: Shadow Warriors



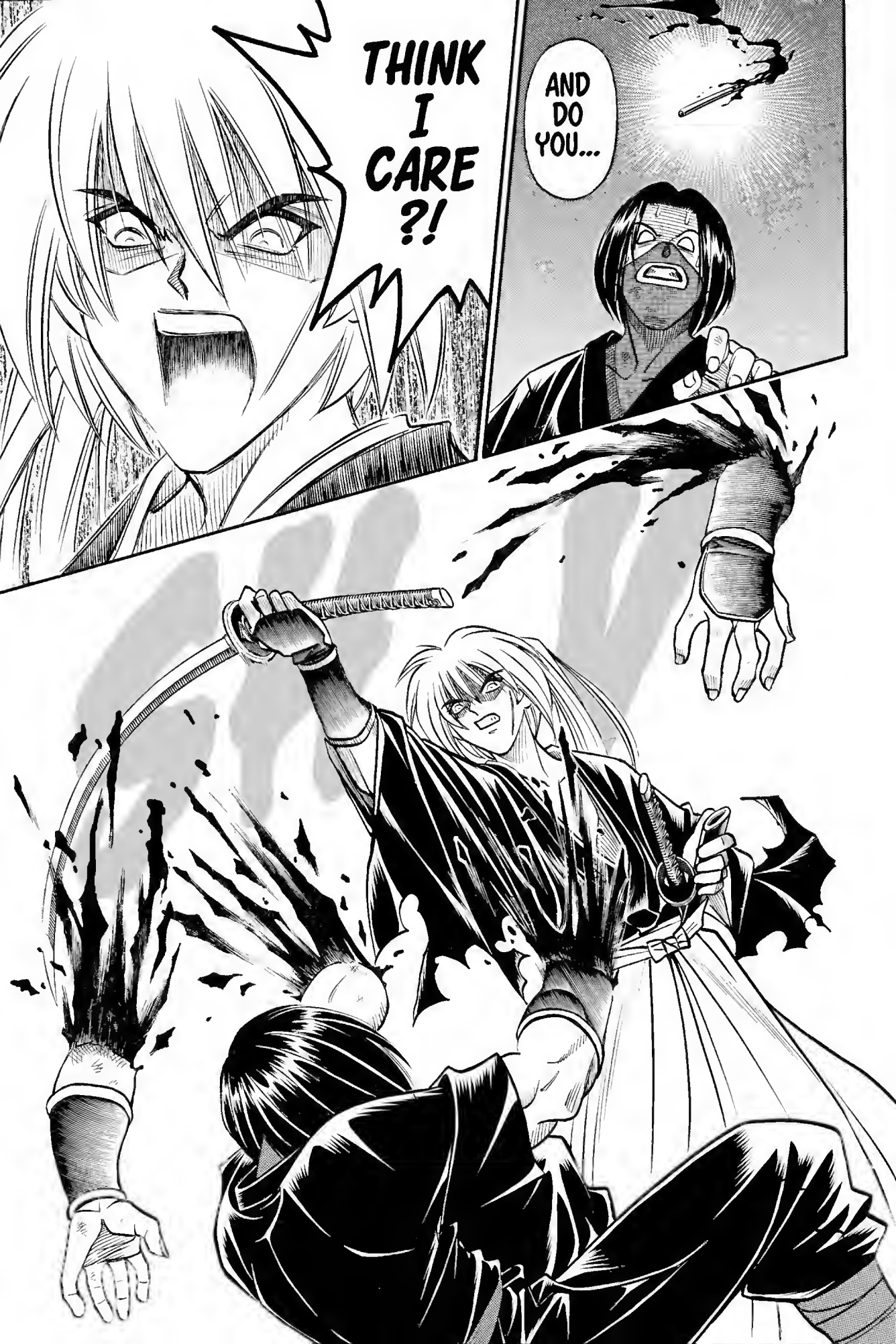
HOOOOO
SHEE
LEAD ME TO TOMOE'S WHERE-ABOUTS.
OR TO YOUR DEATH.
CHOOSE QUICKLY.


...MAYBE...
IF HE'D STEPPED IN...?
WHAT A SWORD STRIKE...
IF HE'D STEPPED IN FURTHER, IT WOULD'VE BEEN BAD.
KH—


HEH

HOW ABOUT THIS ?!
SHAAA

I KNEW IT! IT'S NOT "IF" YOU STEPPED IN FURTHER!
YOU COULDN'T STEP IN CORRECTLY BECAUSE YOU CAN'T CONTROL YOUR BODY!
JAB
YOU HAVE NO CHANCE OF WINNING—
WITH THE FOREST BINDING YOUR SIXTH SENSE, YOUR SKILL IS IMPAIRED!
JJK
GG


THINK I CARE ?!
AND DO YOU...

PSSH
YAAAAAA
MM
GUH...
DH DH
HSS

READ THIS WAY
DH DH DH DH DH DH DH
HH
HH
HH
WHP
WHP
URK!
HH
HH

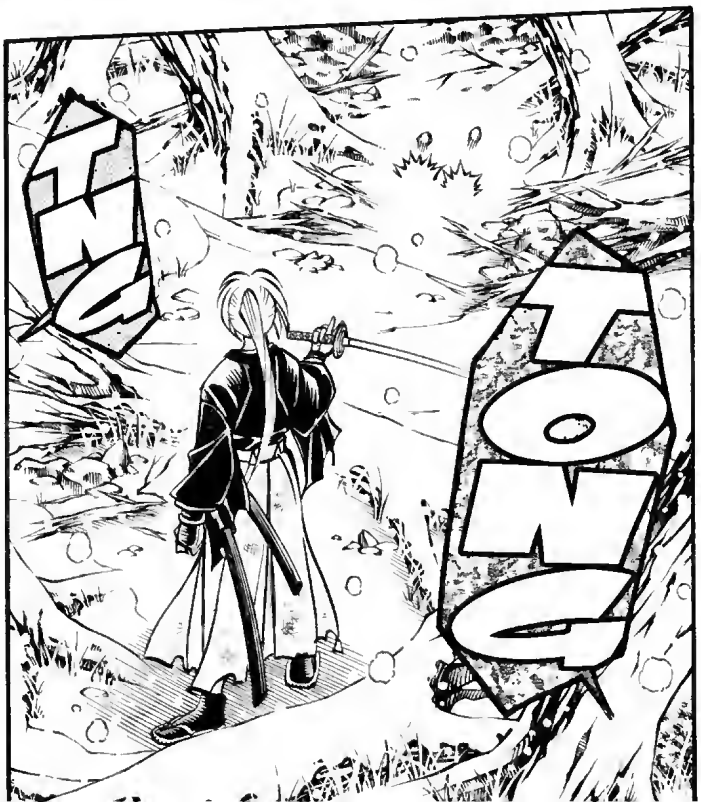
TELL ME WHERE SHE IS.
THEN I'LL KILL YOU QUICKLY.
YOU FORGOT THESE.
HH
HH
HH
THERE ARE THREE MORE OF US! YOU CAN'T BEAT US ALL!
BUT—
DON'T THINK THIS IS OVER!!
NNNNG
...PAST THE CAVE...TO THE RIGHT...

THE YAMINOBU "SHADOW WARRIORS" HAVE BEEN CALLED THE ONIWABANSHŪ OF THE WEST!
WE ARE NINJA AMONG NINJA, ALLOWED ONLY VICTORY!
PIP
AND I...WILL BIND YOU FURTHER!!
JERK
JERK

DOOOM
THHP
THHP
...THAT SOUND...
NAKAJŌ'S BINDING HIM.
WHICH MEANS BATTŌSAI WILL BE COMING.
GOOO
WE'D BETTER HURRY.

SSHHHHHH
HSS—
DOOO

HMPH...
SORE LOSER.
!!
ZZZZZ
ZEN!


TING
TONG

...
CHK
HYU

READ THIS WAY
VOLUME AND DIRECTION ARE DISTORTED...
I CAN'T RELY ON IT FOR A WHILE...
SO... THIS IS WHAT HE WANTED ...
MY HEARING IMPAIRED BY THE NOISE OF THE EXPLOSION IN THE CAVE.
HE TRULY HAS BOUND ME MORE.
NOW YOU'VE LOST TWO SENSES.
ONLY FOUR LEFT TO FIGHT WITH!
GOOOO

DON'T MAKE ME REPEAT MYSELF.
DO YOU...
...THINK I CARE?
...I DO.

WHACK
DASSSH
HUH

PING

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE OBJECTS ATTACK ?!
I'M SURE. BUT...
VVV
EVEN WITHOUT MY INTUITION AND HEARING—
I CAN STILL SEE WELL ENOUGH TO DODGE A THING LIKE THIS!
!

thp
GLINT

SIMULTANEOUS ATTACKS...?
GOOD. WE CAN SAVE A LOT OF TIME THIS WAY.
GRAA
HNN!
AAAAAAA

"FREE TALK"

Long time no see! Watsuki here! Watsuki is slightly anxious, since we've yet to find a new workplace, and there is only three months left on our lease. Seriously, what will we do...?

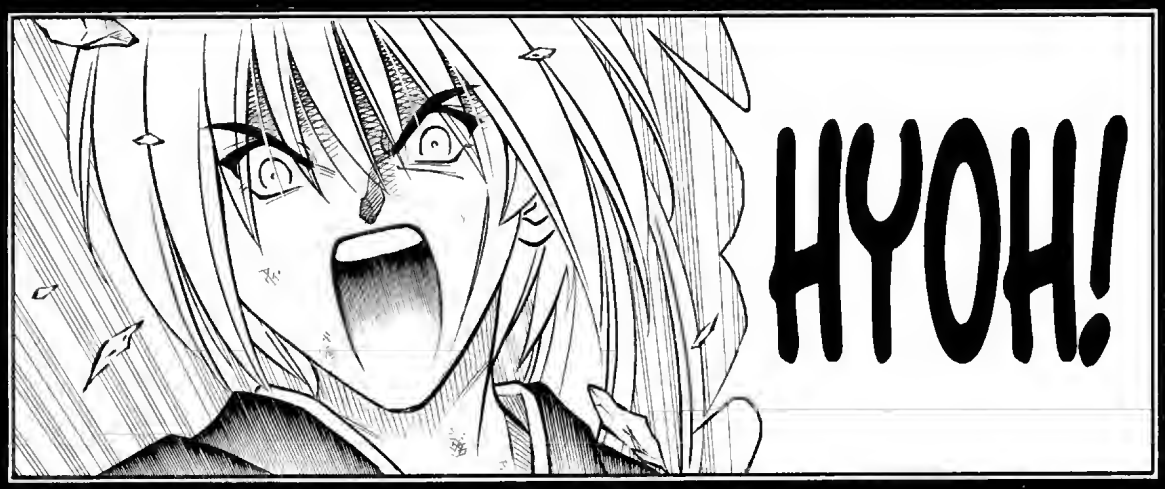
Getting straight to the usual action-figure talk. My favorite figure right now is "Assault Apocalypse" from the *X-Men* series. I personally like the design, but if a normal person looked at it, they'd probably think, "What is this?" I love the gimmick. Basically, when the button on the back is pressed, it shoots missiles out of its chest. It's a pretty basic idea, but five different hatches open instantaneously before the missile is launched! Five hatches, just to shoot a missile!! What stupidity!!! It's great! Gimmicks like that are lacking in the usual McFarlane toys. I'd love them to keep going in that direction.

In terms of games, I haven't been able to play much due to my workload. Even so, I finally beat *Gekka no Kenshi* (SNK) with Washizuka. The ending was exactly the same as I'd imagined, which surprised me. I also got the NeoGeo CD version, so I'd like to take my time and beat the game on all characters. *Samurai Spirits* (SNK) hasn't been installed in the local arcade yet, so I can't play it... I'm looking forward to a console version. One game I think is interesting is *Shiritsu Justice Gakuen* (Capcom). One of my assistants is hooked on it, so I tried it out a little while waiting for *Gekka* and liked it. I was able to enjoy just playing randomly without understanding the system at all. I'll be busy in the near future with the move and all, giving me even less game time than usual, so I hope they put it on a console too.

A new addition to my life, other than figures and games, is a bicycle. That's right, bicycle!! I've always had a bike, but six months ago some shady character messed around with my lock, so I had to get rid of it. I finally decided to spend some big bucks and get a mountain bike. That said, it's actually a fake one with suspension only in the front wheel (the real ones are so expensive I wouldn't want to buy one...). To get back in shape I ride it 15-30 minutes a day when I am not too busy with work. Kichijōji is close enough to ride to, so I can use the time for collecting figures, movies, research, and supplies, killing a few birds with one stone. At least that was plan...but my butt's too sore! I'm staying away from it this week. I should have bought a real one...

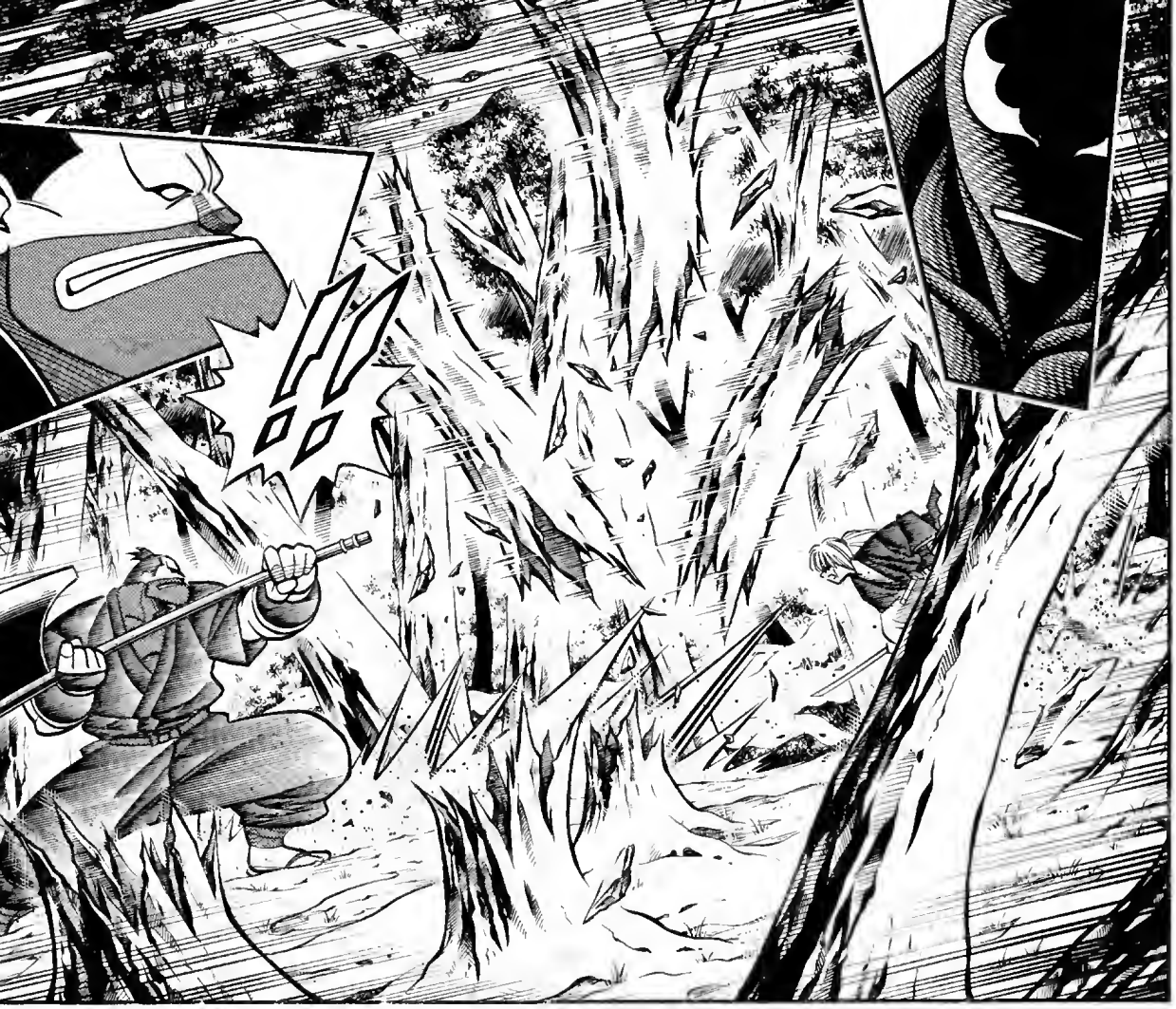
For various reasons, I'm thinking of gradually changing my drawing style. I'm hoping to draw in a way the artwork will still look good, without having to draw so many lines. It'll really challenge my sketching and rendering, but I'll try it. (And I do mean gradually, because I won't—and can't—change suddenly). Meanwhile, the story has finally entered the climax of the current episode. There are two climaxes left. After that, there will be a split in the road. Anyway, see you all in the next volume!

Act 177—Remembrance 12: Fierce Battle

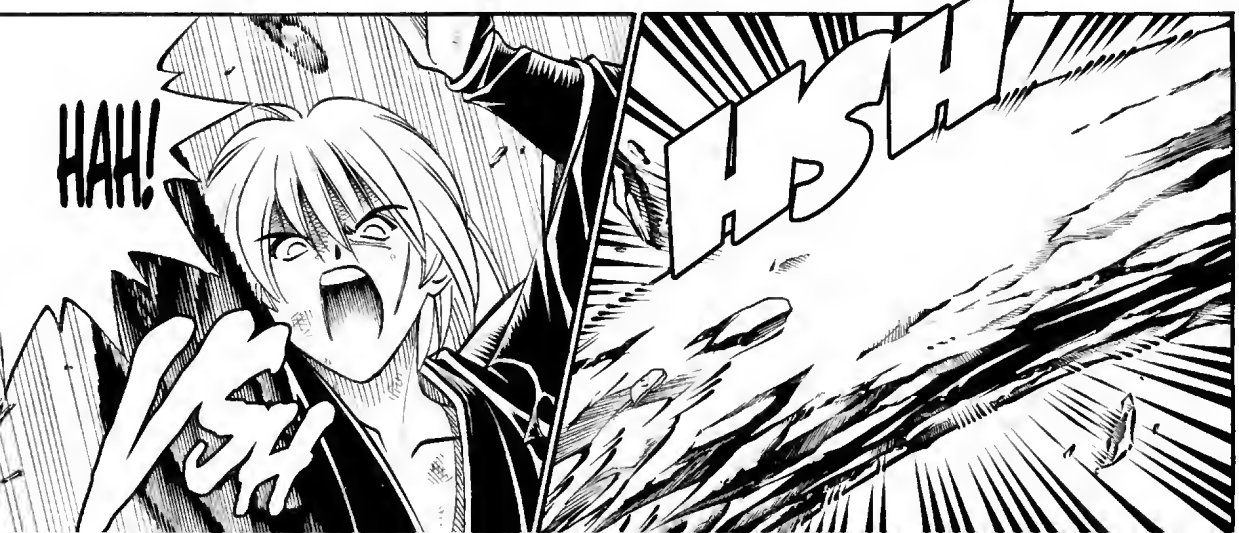


Act 177
Remembrance 12: Fierce Battle

伸宏和月



TP
TP


HAH!
HSH

HIS PLAN IS TO CONCENTRATE ON ONE OF US AT A TIME—
WIDE OPEN ABOVE!!
JUST WHAT WE WERE HOPING FOR!!

KH!
WHAM!

HUH.
HAAAAAA
!

KYOHH
SHP
BLUK
BLUK
GUAH!!

ZZZZ!
WD
NKH!
HH
HH
SHOULD I GIVE YOU CREDIT...
...FOR SUCH PERSIST-ENCE?
A PITY YOU LET GO OF YOUR SWORD!

YOU'RE BECOMING ANNOYING.
SHP
GGGYUH
I'LL KILL YOU SOON.
SO WAIT RIGHT HERE.
HH
HH
TP

IT... WON'T COME OUT?!
HH
TG
GGHH—
TG
TP
I WONDERED HOW YOUR ATTACKS HAD SUCH A REACH.
NOW IT MAKES MUCH MORE SENSE...
HH
HH
YOU... SAW...?
NNGH

NGYA!
PRUP
KCCH
KRYY
TYXK
IT IS THE LAW THAT ANYONE WHO SEES IT MUST DIE!!
THIS BODY IS A SECRET PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS OF THE YATSUME CLAN!!
WSH
IN THIS ERA OR THE NEXT—I WILL KILL YOU!!
I WILL END OUR FIGHT FOR NOW—
BUT SOMEDAY—I WILL KILL YOU!

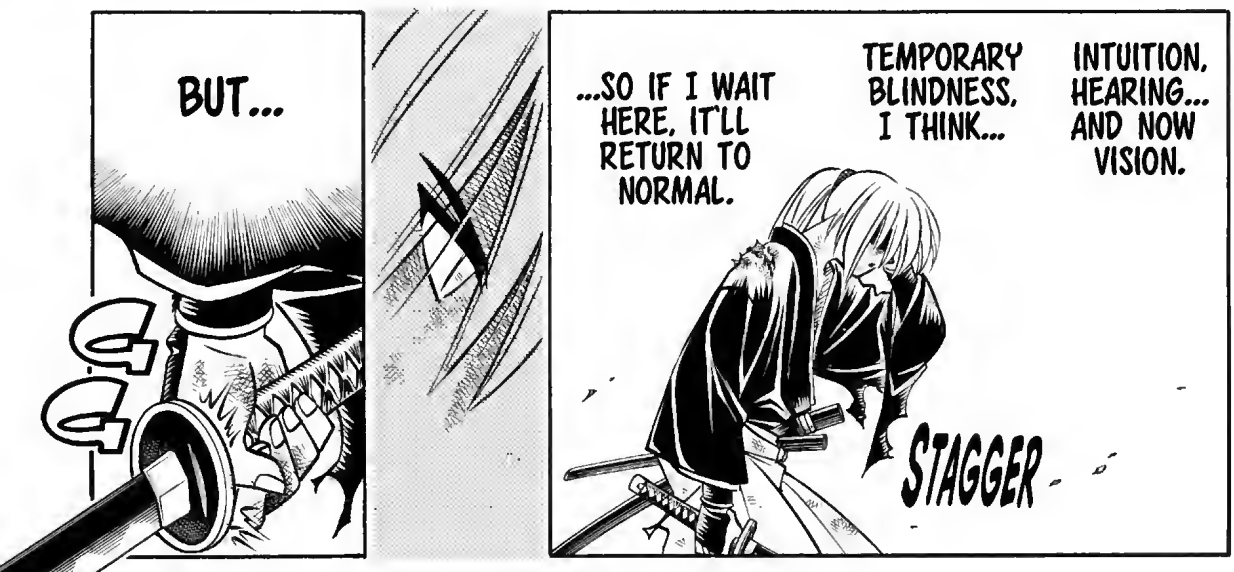
EVEN WITH HIS INTUITION AND HIS HEARING BOUND...
HE'S... HE'S TOO STRONG!!
HH
HH
AND THIS FIGHTING STYLE...IT'S NOTHING BUT RECKLESS CHARGING! HE COULDN'T HAVE ASSASSINATED A HUNDRED PEOPLE THIS WAY!

WHAT IS THIS MAN...?
HE'S NOTHING LIKE THE MAN WE RESEARCHED...!
HHH
HHH

READ THIS WAY
...THE FIRST ONE SAID THERE WERE THREE MORE.
WHERE IS THE LAST ONE...
TP
...IN THE HUT AHEAD.
THE WOMAN IS THERE TOO.
WAIT !!
YOU MIGHT MISS...
TA
THE "THIRD BOND."
TAKE A...
...GOOD LOOK!

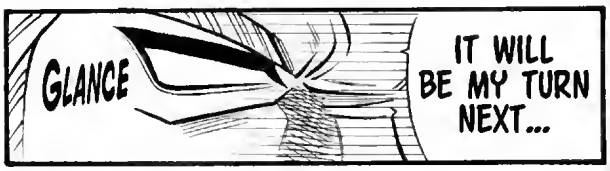
BOOM
!
THAT EXPLO-SION...
BATTŌSAI AND THEM MUST BE FIGHTING!
TOMOE !!
ISH

SO.
SSSSSS
!

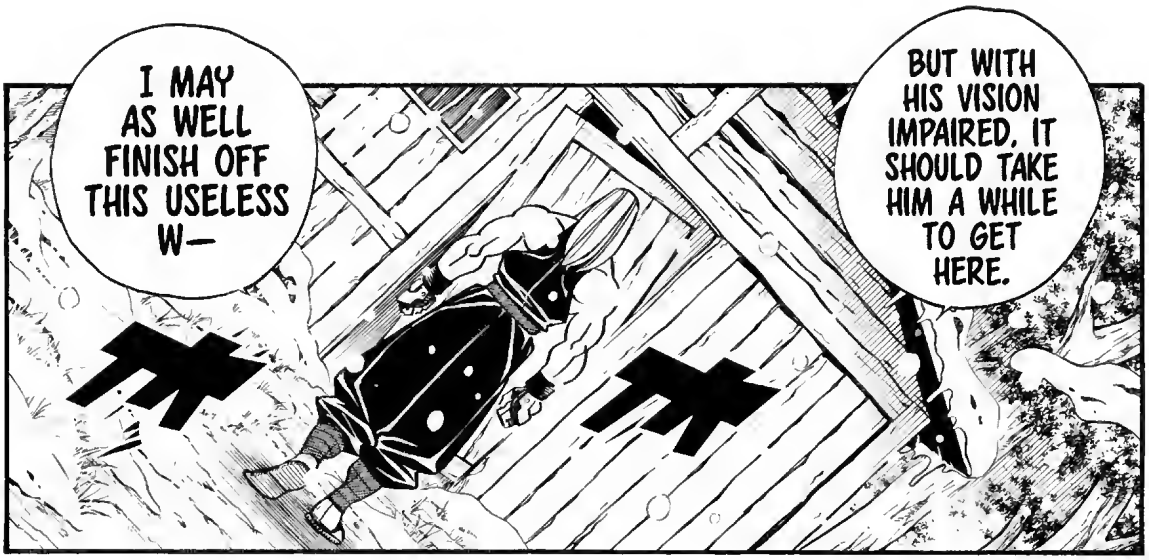

BUT...
...SO IF I WAIT HERE, IT'LL RETURN TO NORMAL.
TEMPORARY BLINDNESS, I THINK...
INTUITION, HEARING... AND NOW VISION.
STAGGER

I
CAN'T
!!!

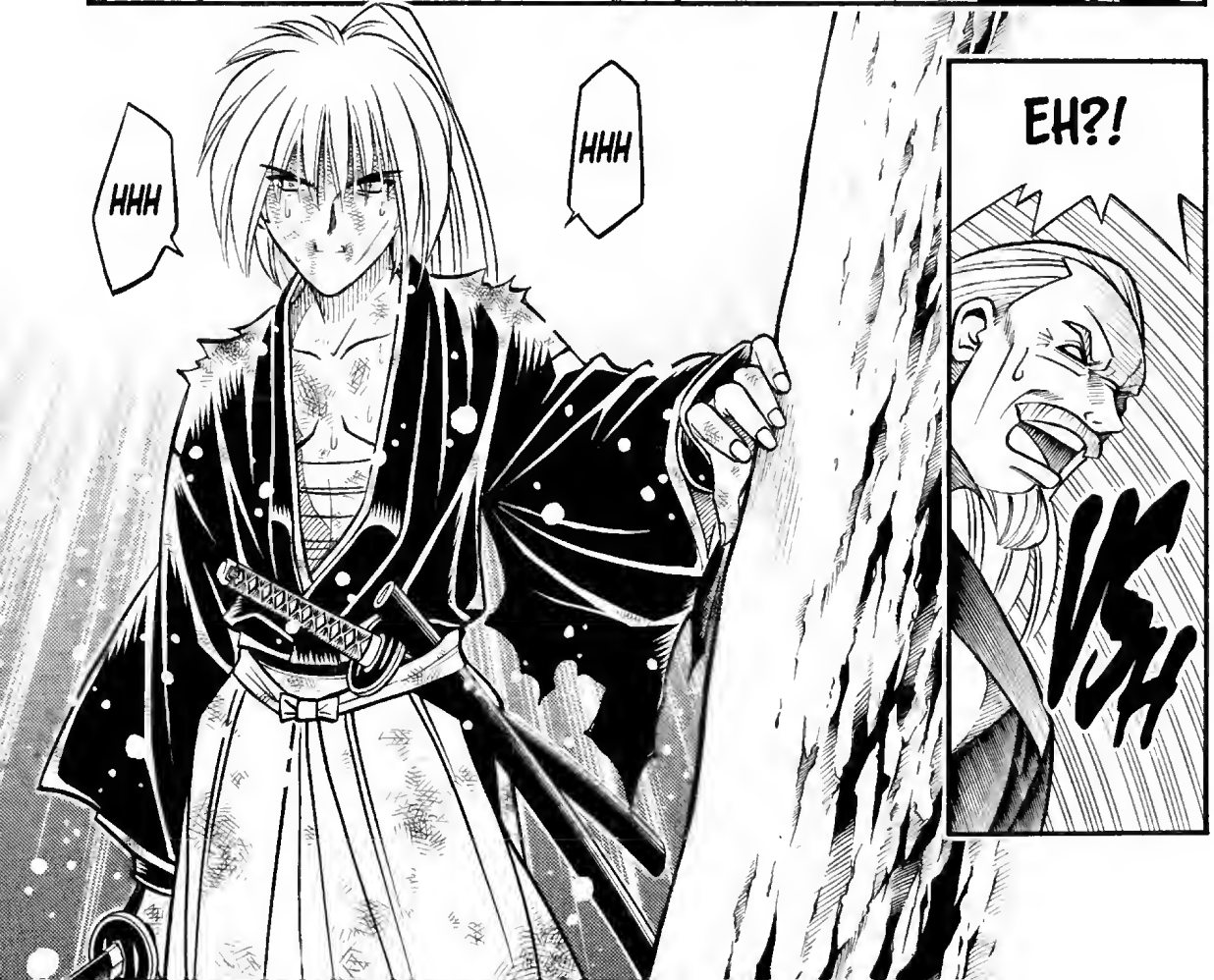
TO DEFEAT THOSE TWO...
HE MUST BE GOOD.


GLANCE
IT WILL BE MY TURN NEXT...

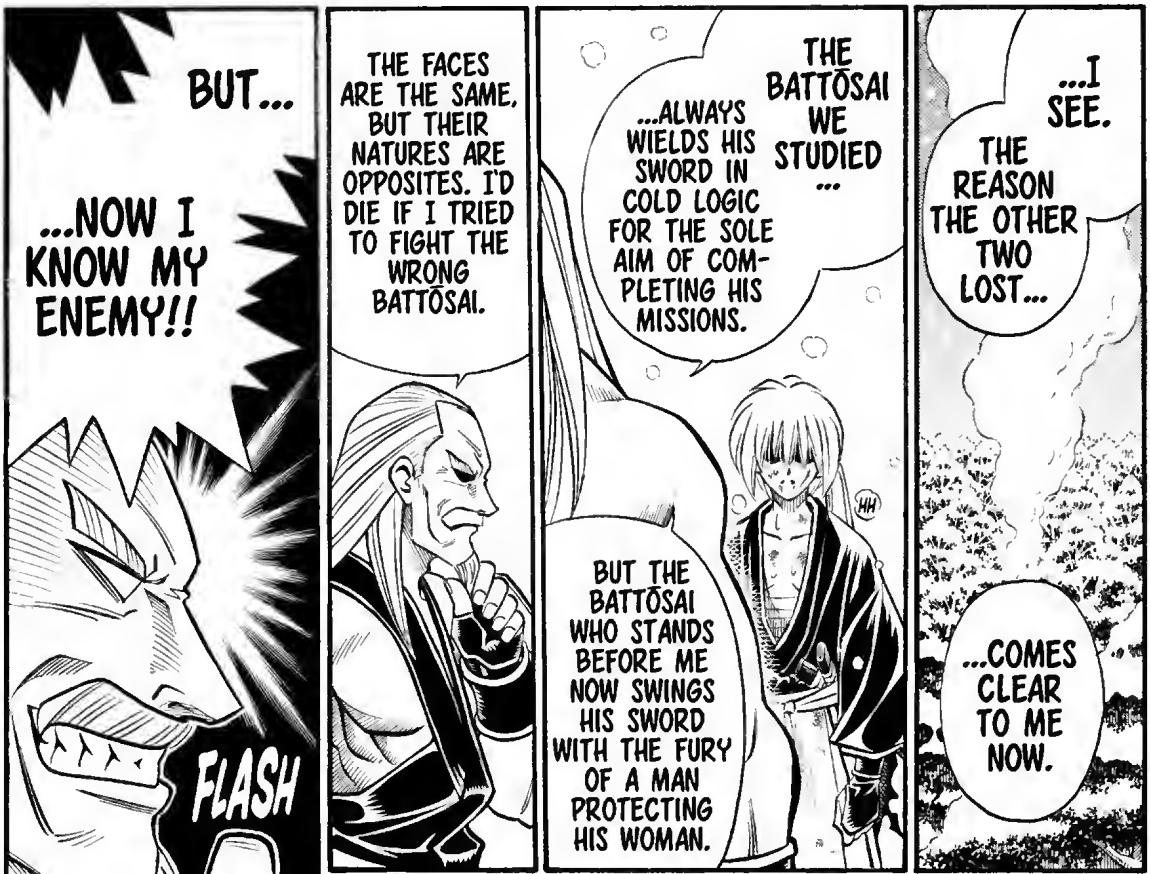
DOOM
...SO SUMITA HAS MADE HIMSELF INTO A BOND TOO.
THAT MUST MEAN YATSUME'S ALSO WOUNDED.


I MAY AS WELL FINISH OFF THIS USELESS W—
BUT WITH HIS VISION IMPAIRED, IT SHOULD TAKE HIM A WHILE TO GET HERE.

TM


HHH
HHH
EH?!
EH

I AM TAKING TOMOE BACK.
...


...I SEE.
THE REASON THE OTHER TWO LOST...
...COMES CLEAR TO ME NOW.
THE BATTŌSAI WE STUDIED ...
...ALWAYS WIELDS HIS SWORD IN COLD LOGIC FOR THE SOLE AIM OF COMPLETING HIS MISSIONS.
BUT THE BATTŌSAI WHO STANDS BEFORE ME NOW SWINGS HIS SWORD WITH THE FURY OF A MAN PROTECTING HIS WOMAN.
THE FACES ARE THE SAME, BUT THEIR NATURES ARE OPPOSITES. I'D DIE IF I TRIED TO FIGHT THE WRONG BATTŌSAI.
BUT...
...NOW I KNOW MY ENEMY!!
FLASH

To Be Continued in Vol. 21: And So, Time Passed

GLOSSARY of the RESTORATION

A brief guide to select Japanese terms used in ***Rurouni Kenshin****. Note that, both here and within the story itself, all names are Japanese style—i.e., last or "family" name first, with personal or "given" name following. This is both because* ***Kenshin*** *is a "period" story, as well as to decrease confusion—if we were to take the example of Kenshin's* sakabatô *and "reverse" the format of the historically established assassin-name "Hitokiri Battôsai," for example, it would make little sense to then call him "Battôsai Himura."*

genpuku
A ceremony commemorating a young samurai becoming an adult and usually occurring between the ages of 12 and 18. A samurai could not be married before the ***genpuku*** occurred.

hakubaikô
The fragrance of white plum blossoms

Himura Kenshin
Kenshin's "real" name, revealed to Kaoru only at her urging

Hiten Mitsurugi-ryû
Kenshin's sword technique, used more for defense than offense. An "ancient style that pits one against many," it requires exceptional speed and agility to master.

hitokiri
An assassin. Famous swordsmen of the period were sometimes thus known to adopt "professional" names—***Kawakami Gensai***, for example, was also known as "Hitokiri Gensai."

Ishin Shishi
Loyalist or pro-Imperialist ***patriots*** who fought to restore the Emperor to his ancient seat of power

Kawakami Gensai
Real-life, historical inspiration for the character of ***Himura Kenshin***

Bakumatsu
Final, chaotic days of the Tokugawa regime

Boshin War
Civil war of 1868-69 between the new government and the ***Tokugawa Bakufu***. The anti-*Bakufu*, pro-Imperial side (the Imperial Army) won, easily defeating the Tokugawa supporters.

-chan
Honorific. Can be used either as a diminutive (e.g., with a small child—"Little Hanako or Kentarô"), or with those who are grown, to indicate affection ("My dear...").

-dono
Honorific. Even more respectful than ***-san***; the effect in modern-day Japanese conversation would be along the lines of "Milord So-and-So." As used by Kenshin, it indicates both respect and humility.

Edo
Capital city of the ***Tokugawa Bakufu***; renamed ***Tokyo*** ("Eastern Capital") after the Meiji Restoration

sakabatô
Reversed-edge sword (the dull edge on the side the sharp should be, and vice versa); carried by Kenshin as a symbol of his resolution never to kill again

-sama
Honorific. The respectful equivalent of ***-san***, ***-sama*** is used primarily in addressing persons of much higher rank than one's self...or, in a romantic sense, in addressing those upon whom one is crushing, wicked hard.

-san
Honorific. Carries the meaning of "Mr.," "Ms.," "Miss," etc., but used more extensively in Japanese than its English equivalent (note that even an enemy may be addressed as "***-san***").

shôgun
Feudal military ruler of Japan

shôgunate
See ***Tokugawa Bakufu***

Toba Fushimi, Battle at
Battle near ***Kyoto*** between the forces of the new, imperial government and the fallen ***shôgunate***. Ending with an imperial victory, it was the first battle of the ***Boshin War***.

Tokugawa Bakufu
Military feudal government which dominated Japan from 1603 to 1867

Tokyo
The renaming of "***Edo***" to "***Tokyo***" is a marker of the start of the ***Meiji Restoration***

-kun
Honorific. Used in the modern day among male students, or those who grew up together, but another usage—the one you're more likely to find in *Rurouni Kenshin*—is the "superior-to-inferior" form, intended as a way to emphasize a difference in status or rank, as well as to indicate familiarity or affection.

Kyoto
Home of the Emperor and imperial court from A.D. 794 until shortly after the ***Meiji Restoration*** in 1868

loyalists
Those who supported the return of the Emperor to power; ***Ishin Shishi***

Meiji Restoration
1853-1868; culminated in the collapse of the ***Tokugawa Bakufu*** and the restoration of imperial rule. So called after Emperor Meiji, whose chosen name was written with the characters for "culture and enlightenment."

Mimawarigumi
Like the *Shinsengumi*, the ***Mimawarigumi*** also patrolled the streets of Kyoto

Oniwabanshû
Elite group of *onmitsu* or "spies" of the ***Edo*** period, also known as *ninja* or ***shinobi***

rurouni
Wanderer, vagabond